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THE END OF A CHAPTER

BY

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21569

REVISED EDITION

LONDON
CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LIMITED.
1917

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PREFACE

It was while invalided in hospital during the Great War that I began to record notes and souvenirs of the times and institutions under which I had lived, realising that I had witnessed the suicide of the civilisation called Christian and the travail of a new era to which no gods have been as yet rash enough to give their name, and remembering that, with my friends and contemporaries, I shared the fortunes and misfortunes of being born at the end of a chapter in history.

To the memory of those of them who have died before the next chapter has begun I dedicate this book, and especially to that of my brother, Captain Norman Leslie, whom I buried at Armentières in France, between the guns of two armies.

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THE END OF A CHAPTER

CHAPTER I

LINKS WITH THE PAST

PEOPLE who are old enough to write memoirs have usually lost their memory. Fresh memories have few memoirs. I have had to fall back upon the unpublished memoirs of others, having been born only half way through the eighties. I was brought up at Glaslough, in the county of Monaghan, in Ireland, on the townland of Castle Lesly —such space upon God's earth as previous Leslies had been able to hold by purchase, forfeiture, or force of arms against "The MacKenna of Truagh." The Irish branch of the Leslies was founded by Bishop John Leslie, who kept his diocese of the Isles creditably clear of Cromwellians during the Civil War. In Ireland, as Bishop of Raphoe, he built a fort instead of a palace, and was known

as "The Fighting Bishop." Before battle he used to invoke divine neutrality on the plea that "though we are sinners, the enemy are not saints." He lived to be a centenarian, and at the Restoration rode from Chester to London, a distance of one hundred and eighty miles, to welcome the King. He was then in his ninetieth year. From this grim stuff sprang a race of theologian squires with an addiction to lost causes. They supported the Stuarts and voted against the Union. One fled into exile rather than acknowledge William of Orange, and another refused a bribe rather than betray the Irish Parliament. It was a Leslie who took out a patent for the lost island of Atlantis or Brazil, which was last seen floating down Galway Bay. The family were perhaps lucky to have so much real land to restore to the original owners under the Land Purchase Acts.

A grandson of "The Fighting Bishop" was Charles Leslie. He and the Duke of Wellington's father married sisters. Charles's grandson is my grandfather, Sir John Leslie, who could claim last year, in the centenary of Waterloo, to be a surviving cousin of the victor. To make the link with the past I asked him to sign my application to go to the Great War.

Before I went, I spent some hours delving in

his memory, which is very accurate concerning events before the Crimean War. Born in 1822, he has seen the whole Victorian era from its prelude to its aftermath. He has outlived almost all his contemporaries, and even seen their children die of old age. A third and a fourth generation he has seen go out to perish in the war of wars.

The only thing he could remember of the old duke was being taken to see him as a schoolboy—and getting no tip! Scores remember the duke's funeral, but my grandfather is probably the only living person who has seen Talleyrand and heard the voice of Sir Walter Scott.

He can remember five reigns. George IV he once saw looking through a window in his last days, and he heard the London newsboys cry his death. He was born while Pius VII (Napoleon's Pope) was still alive and Monroe was President of the States. His father, born in 1769, was not able to distinguish between American citizens and Yankee rebels!

My grandfather saw Talleyrand on the steps of Hertford House when ambassador of France to St. James. Talleyrand had been a French bishop before the Revolution and subdeacon at the coronation of Louis XVI ! My grandfather was chiefly interested in the white-capped cooks whom that

astute diplomat had introduced into London. Little did he dream that a granddaughter of his would one day marry the great-grandson of the Comte de Flahaut, Talleyrand's illegitimate son—(so says the *Encyclopædia Britannica*).

As a boy travelling in a Scotland undefiled by railways, he once listened to a kind old gentleman who entered the coach at Edinburgh and explained the antiquities as they passed. It was Sir Walter Scott in his anecdotage. Soon afterwards my grandfather went to Harrow School. It was in the stern old days of William IV, and he remembers vividly the week's journey from Glaslough to Harrow on the top of a coach, without an overcoat! In October, 1834, he watched the old House of Parliament burning from the top of Harrow Hill. His house, Dr. Longley's, also suffered a fire, and he saw a future Archbishop of Canterbury, in a fit of economic panic, throw the contents of the boys' bedrooms on to the heads of those who were putting out the fire from below! He was taught to write Latin verses by "Harry" Drury, who had instilled a first notion of the poetic art into Byron forty years before. Dr. George Butler was then headmaster, and his son, the present Master of Trinity, told me that Drury and Byron sat up one whole night discussing the

immortality of the soul. With morning they parted—Drury to school and Byron to bathe.

While a Harrow boy he subscribed to the first shilling parts of *Pickwick Papers*, by an unknown author. Unfortunately he threw them away when read. One day an old boy came down to the school dressed in a sporting check, the boys clustering round to hear his yarns. It was the future Cardinal Manning, whom my grandfather describes as the neatest rider in Rotten Row. Another day the poet Wordsworth came down to the school.

At Oxford he went to Christ Church under Dean Gaisford, who unkindly sent him down for a term. He remembered the youthful Ruskin then at Christ Church being ragged by hearty Britons. Ruskin caused great amusement by bringing a portentous old mother with him to college, whom the young bloods considered "a holy horror."

After playing cricket for Oxford against Cambridge in 1843, he went on the grand tour, riding through Spain with Mr. Hardinge, father of the Indian viceroy. Later he drove to Rome, through Italy, meeting Rossini and Mrs. Browning, and saw George Sand smoke—the first lady in Europe to do so. These were the picturesque days when the Pope still walked the streets, and the monsignori presided over the police and sewers. When

he returned to Rome forty years later both Pope and Tiber had been enclosed within stone walls to the great artistic loss of the city.

He knew London in the forties, and heard men who are now legendary, such as Macaulay, Brougham, and Peel, speak in Parliament. His Oxford tutor warned him not to attend Newman's Anglican sermons, and he recalls the timid little, ethereal, Jew-like doctor, whose secession later shook the church, moving through the lanes of Oxford.

In those days Tom Moore and O'Connell played the parts of Yeats and Redmond in London to-day. Moore had hung up his rebel harp in the Whig salons of London when my grandfather met him, while O'Connell used to strut the streets modulating his small talk with the gestures of oratory. He could remember Louis Philippe in Hyde Park, and Napoleon III he knew as a foreign adventurer prowling St. James' Street for country-house invitations. The future Emperor was not considered a sportsman, and when he proposed to my grandmother's sister (Lady Fortescue) he was refused by Colonel Damer as a penniless Frenchman! Damer had been on Cathcart's staff at Waterloo, and had a poor opinion of the Bonapartes! My grandmother remembers the future

Emperor staying at their home at Came, in Dorset, and winning her over with half-crowns and barley-sugar, which he used to buy for her in Dorchester. Everybody thought Napoleon dull and fled him. When found wandering alone the dreamer remarked to one of the family: "*Il paraît que j'ennuie ces jeunes gens.*" He used to tell old Damer: "*Vous me verrez un jour aux Tuileries.*" Damer doubtless shook his head, for like all soldiers of that time he had spent his life getting the uncle out of the Tuileries. As attaché in Russia he had witnessed the retreat from Moscow. So terrible were the scenes, when not only "*Général Février*" but the wolves fought for the Czar, that he would never mention them. When his daughter married Lord Fortescue, Napoleon III sent her as a wedding gift a beautiful fan, which had belonged to his mother the Queen Hortense.

A quaint memory of my grandfather was D'Orsay, the last of the Dandies, whom he affected with the young bloods of the time. By his account D'Orsay was only an early Victorian Oscar Wilde living on his clothes and his notoriety. When D'Orsay died, he left him his most precious possession—his valet, whose wages he had omitted to pay for some years. The "gorgeous" Lady

Blessington he recalled supported by two no less gorgeous footmen for crutches.

In the world of sport he has seen wonderful changes. He was the last to use a muzzle-loader to shoot pheasants, and he often killed them at distances which the more modern guns did not reach. He has seen the rise and decline and final disappearance of modern first-class cricket. He is the *doyen* of the Marylebone Cricket Club, the hallowed ark of all English cricket. His membership dates from 1841. As a Harrow boy he saw his first Derby in Bloomsbury's year, 1839—the horse that "won the Derby and a lawsuit and broiled the Lords and the Commons": and as a young officer he won the Grand Military Steeplechase on his own horse. The late Lord Harlech recorded how he appeared unattended and won as an outsider by beautiful riding.

In his youth prize-fighting was the national sport, and "the champion of England" was, after the Archbishop of Canterbury, unofficially the second person in the realm. He watched the famous fight between Sayers and Heenan, which roused more real feeling between England and America than the *Alabama*. To a degenerate generation he used to describe how Sayers faced his rival like a polo-pony against a dray-horse, and

though his right arm was soon put out of action fought thirty rounds with his left until Heenan's face was a red mask. Unfortunately, Sayers's backers broke the ring rather than lose their money, and the fight was declared drawn. It was the climax and end of the old English boxing without gloves. Never again did deputations from both Houses attend a prize-fight.

My grandfather had retired from the army before the outbreak of the Crimean War in order to devote himself to art. If he is not the oldest cavalry officer in England,* he is the last of the pre-Raphaelites. Holman Hunt, and Millais, whose profile resembled his, became his close friends. Landseer came to him for comfort as one of the few artists who approved his lions in Trafalgar Square. It was to my grandmother that Watts wrote a delicate letter explaining that he married Ellen Terry—to save her from the dangers of the stage! She was one of those present at that dreamlike union between Art and Beauty—which

* Until the recent Zeppelin raids he was the only surviving soldier to have seen service in the streets of London. He rode out with the First Life Guards during the Chartist riots of 1848. Between the writing and printing of this chapter he has died. *Requiescat in pace.* (January 23, 1916.)

was only to break like an iridescent bubble. When Watts died, a beautiful picture of my grandmother in her youth was unrolled from the lumber of his studio.

My grandfather went to Düsseldorf, and painted his first picture in the Black Forest—a study of children being shown a crucifix. As he was quite unknown, it was a pleasant surprise to be placed on the line at the Royal Academy and to receive a flattering letter from the Prince Consort, to whom Germany and Christianity were the same. It was as sudden and unique a brilliance as winning the Grand Military without a backer.

He succeeded his brother Charles to his Irish estates in 1871, and celebrated the event by defeating Isaac Butt, Parnell's predecessor in Irish leadership, at the Monaghan polls. A few years later he was himself defeated by Tim Healy, Parnell's secretary. It was the last stand the old gentry and grand juries made against the Nationalists. When I stood as a Nationalist nearly thirty years later, I was accused of giving my hand to a family foe. On the contrary, I found the Nationalist party then fighting Tim far more bitterly than we ever did. Tim is the greatest orator in the Empire according to Balfour, and he has all the Celtic gift and attraction for enmities.

It is difficult not to think of him as an imp who has fallen into the holy water by mistake. It was lucky for the Church he was baptised a Catholic, for his tongue can say terrible things. When a minister was enumerating the power at the disposal of the Crown against the Boers to the tune of "We've got the ships and the money, and we've got the men," he paused and asked what the Boers had—"God!" came a hiss—it is believed from Tim Healy. At any rate, the effect was electric.

My grandfather witnessed an effective piece of play in the House during a duel between Disraeli and Gladstone. During a heated flight of oratory Gladstone upset some pens on the table between them. Disraeli rose and, after calling attention to the fact, slowly replaced them one by one. The effect of Gladstone's speech was lost by the time Disraeli finished.

He had two brothers, Charles and Tom. Charles was a generous landlord, and once paid the election expenses of a ruined opponent. A monument was erected to him by "a grateful tenantry" in Glaslough village—a drinking fountain designed by Sir Edgar Boehm. Our relations with our tenantry have been so good that I may give a story of how we got even with them in recent years. We were exhibiting turnips

at the Monaghan show, but they were of inferior growth, so our steward, to save the honour of the family, stole out at dead of night and removed the best turnips from an old tenant's farm! With these we won handsomely, but—the truth being told—were disqualified.

I should add that when the rents were reduced by the Land Commission, a number of tenants refused to go into court out of respect for my grandfather. Only in Ireland could such loyalty exist.

Charles Leslie accompanied Lord Hartington, afterward Duke of Devonshire, on a trip to the American Civil War. They passed through the lines of both armies, visiting Richmond and the White House. Unfortunately, Hartington appeared at a New York ball wearing a Southern favour given him by the mother of a future English duchess. They were lucky to return alive.

Charles Leslie was interested to find that Archbishop Hughes of New York had been born on his estate—amid the snipe bogs of Annaloghlan. Hughes was perhaps the greatest Irishman of his century, with all the talents and none of the defects of his race. If he suffered, like Lincoln, from "education defective," he was as great in argument or administration. At Lincoln's request he went and persuaded Napoleon III not to recognise

the South during the Civil War. He was a Moses to the Irish race, for he established Catholic citizenship in a Promised Land. The body of this great and simple man lies under the Gothic Cathedral he planted on Fifth Avenue.

My grandfather's other brother, Tom Leslie, was wounded in the Crimea by a Russian bullet, which the Commander-in-Chief sent home to his mother. He was on Lord Raglan's staff, and it was to him the order resulting in the Charge of Balaclava was first given. He told me nearly fifty years later that he was about to take the order, which ran—"Lord Raglan wishes the cavalry to advance rapidly to the front, and try to prevent the enemy carrying away the guns."

But a popular young officer, Captain Nolan, asked for the honour and galloped off with the message to Lord Lucan, leaving Tom to curse what is known in the family as "Leslie Luck."

Raglan wished some Turkish guns taken by the Russians to be saved, but Lucan could not see them and questioned Nolan, who, being a hot Celt, pointed toward the Russian guns at the end of the valley and asked if he were afraid. Lucan repeated the blunder to Lord Cardigan, a duelling rake, who instantly led the famous charge. As they swept toward the jaws of death, a headless horseman

crossed their track and fell. It was Nolan, who had probably ridden back to correct his mistake but was the first to be killed by the fatal guns. "Some one had blundered." At any rate, it was not a Leslie.

In 1856 my grandfather married Constance, daughter of "Minny" Seymour, the adopted daughter of Mrs. Fitzherbert, the wife of George IV. With the permission of Edward VII, and some aid from my grandmother, Mr. Wilkins wrote two volumes on that royal romance.

George IV actually married Mrs. Fitzherbert in the presence of her brother and uncle when Prince of Wales. It was of her some poet wrote when she lived at Richmond:

> "I would crowns resign to call her mine,
> Sweet lass of Richmond Hill."

The trouble was that Mrs. Fitzherbert was a devout Catholic, and insisted on a legal wedding, which was afterward denied by Fox in the House. Mrs. Fitzherbert never used her position for personal ends. Whatever influence in the prince's life was good came from her. Whatever unhappiness entered hers came from him. Even after he slighted her and married an official queen, she was willing to return to him with the permission of the Pope,

in whose eyes her marriage remained legal and binding. Her gentle piety and dauntless wifehood endeared her to the whole royal family, and William IV gave her leave to wear widow's weeds for George IV, who was buried with her miniature round his neck. She refused the title of duchess as savouring of the rank of a royal courtesan, but her servants wore the royal livery.

After the King's death the Duke of Wellington induced her to burn all the papers in her possession except the certificate of the marriage, a letter, and the will of the King, a letter by the officiating minister, and a note written by Mrs. Fitzherbert attached to it, which were placed in Coutt's Bank. King Edward VII gave permission to Wilkins to publish what was needed to prove the marriage, when the box was opened more than seventy years later. The papers were then removed to the Windsor Archives. They were not published in full or perhaps the mystery of Mrs. Fitzherbert's children might have been cleared.

It is said that she bore the prince children, but if so they were born sacramentally and her own family had naught to conceal. The unproven tradition among her Catholic relatives was that she had children, and that one of them was at one time designed to marry the restored Bourbon King of

France. The following exists in Mrs. Fitzherbert's handwriting:

I, Mary Fitzherbert desire my executors to employ the will signed by George P of W's in support of my character with Posterity, but I do not ask to found upon it, any pecuniary claims on the personalty of His late Majesty, George the 4th so witness my hand.

this ——— day of ——————— 1836.

I, Mary Fitzherbert, moreover testify that my union with George P. of Wales was without issue.

Witness ———

This is obviously a rough copy and, being unsigned, leaves the mystery a mystery.

Though there have been American pretenders to be descended from George IV and Mrs. Fitzherbert, she left her personalty to her adopted daughter "Minny" Seymour and her adopted niece Marianne Smythe. It has been supposed they were her children. "Minny" (Mary Georgiana) Seymour was my great-grandmother, daughter of Lord Hugh and Lady Horatia Seymour. If she had been Mrs. Fitzherbert's daughter, Mrs. Fitzherbert would never have promised to bring her up Protestant. Marianne Smythe, however, married into the Catholic Jerninghams. Difficulties pursued Mrs. Fitzherbert. Lord Hugh Seymour died, mentioning all his children except "Minny"

(Mary) Seymour. The Seymours wished to remove the child from Mrs. Fitzherbert. The "Seymour Case" followed, in which the Prince of Wales supported Mrs. Fitzherbert's claim to the child and even canvassed the peers on her behalf. In the end Lord Hertford, the head of the Seymours, committed her to Mrs. Fitzherbert's care. The prince made a great pet of her, and her letters to him (addressed to "dear Prinny") are extant in the Windsor Archives. During the "Seymour Case" the prince said in his affidavit that he was under a dying request from Lady Horatia Seymour —"to be the father and protector through life of this dear child."

The prince certainly kept his promise. When the girl was pressed by her family to marry Lord Francis Egerton, at a time that her heart was set on Colonel Damer, she appealed to "Prinny" who had become George IV. In her letter she begged the protection of one "toward whom from my peculiar position I am more bound than any other human being." And she continued: "Your Majesty's great goodness and parental conduct which commenced with my earliest years, and has been graciously extended to me to this present moment, only increases the pain and embarrassment I feel, etc." (July 13, 1825.)

In the end she was allowed to marry Colonel Damer. Though the King treated her with a parent's love it seems impossible for her to have been Mrs. Fitzherbert's child. Whether Mrs. Fitzherbert had children or not must remain undecided until two pages which have been cut from the Catholic baptismal at Brighton are restored. The pages under 1800 and 1803 have been removed. After 1803 Mrs. Fitzherbert left the prince. The mystery, if there is one, is undoubtedly contained in the Windsor Archives.

Mrs. Fitzherbert left her pearls to Marianne Smythe, and her other relics to "Minny" Damer, who divided them among her daughters—the portrait by Romney and the King's miniature to Lady Fortescue, the locket with the King's hair and the bracelet to Lady Constance Leslie, her pictures and Mrs. Fitzherbert's rosary to Lady Blanche Heygarth.

The latter has described to me being taken to Mrs. Fitzherbert's dying chamber in Tilney Street. She recognised the litanies which were chanted on that occasion afterwards on reading Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*. She erected a monument to Mrs. Fitzherbert in the Catholic church at Brighton, Lady Blanche and Lady Constance adding a postscript stating by whom the monument had been placed in the chapel. On her hand

were chiselled the wedding-rings of her two Catholic husbands, and finally the fatal circlet which united her to "the First Gentleman" and the uttermost cad in Europe.

By accidental irony, on the wall above her tomb is the stray lettering—*Sancte Georgi ora pro nobis* (St. George pray for us). It were more fitting that an *Ave Maria* were inscribed on the coffin of a King, whose sole claim to grace is that he was the husband of Maria Fitzherbert!

My grandmother remembers Colonel Damer taking her to Brussels after the *coup d'état* of 1851, and hearing Thiers abuse "*le coquin*" as he called Napoleon. She has many memories of the *Vanity Fair* of Thackeray's time. Curiously enough, it was her relative, Lord Hertford, whom he pilloried as the wicked Marquis of Steyne in *Vanity Fair*, and even sketched from life in the suppressed plate of the first edition. Thackeray was due to dine at her house the night before he died, and his last letter was written to refuse. In the exquisite minuscules with which he wrote to friends he sent word:

Saturday.

DEAR MRS. LESLIE:

Since I wrote and said yes, I have been in bed 2 days and fate and the Doctor say No. Indeed I am unfit to

come (I have only this minute crawled down to my sofa) and nobody can be more sorry than

Yours very faithfully,
W. M. THACKERAY.

This was written on December 22, 1863, and the writer died two days later. Years afterward his daughter saw the letter and said it must have been the last time he ever wrote.*

Thackeray and Dickens used to be on bad terms. My grandmother recalls the ludicrous incident which brought them together. As they both left the Athenæum, unknown to each other, they seized the same hat. The effect was ludicrous enough to appeal even to professional humorists and they shook hands.

Her strangest link with the past was being taken to see Miss Berry, then ninety years of age, to whom Horace Walpole had proposed marriage. Miss Berry was the anonymous figurehead of Thackeray's *Four Georges* when he wrote:

A very few years since I knew familiarly a lady who had been asked in marriage by Horace Walpole, who had been patted on the head by George I. This lady had

* She wrote in 1901—"I could have cried over the letter of my father. It was quite strongly and well written. Who could have thought that dear pen was to be laid aside for ever?"

knocked at Doctor Johnson's door; had been intimate with Fox. I often thought as I took my kind old friend's hand, how with it I held on to the old Society of wits and men of the world.

Perhaps my grandmother is now the only living person to have touched a hand that knocked on Johnson's door. She has seen the evolution of society from the crinoline to the tango, from the time when it was a close club to the latter days when it resembled a mob. Joachim and Rubinstein had played in her house in early days. In the fifties she heard Mrs. Sartoris (*née* Adelaide Kemble) sing one of his poems to Tennyson, with Rossetti, Burne Jones, and Doyle for audience. Landseer used to mimic "The Dook," as Wellington was called, in her salon. In those days gold was pronounced "gould" and china "cheney." She noted 1860 as about the year that Christmas cards superseded valentines. She attended the last ball given by Palmerston,* and saw him weeping for the Prince Consort—the only time tears were recorded of

* I may add a last memory from her note-book—"Countess Castiglione's appearance at Lady Palmerston's 28 June, 1862, gloriously beautiful—quite mobbed—and all the English beauties paled before her." *Où sont les neiges d'antan?*

"Pam," Though innocent of any sporting proclivity, she was loyal enough to dream that Edward VII's Persimmon would win the Derby, and on the strength of her dream wagered five pounds successfully in the cause of charity.

When Lady Cardigan's grim memoirs of the English aristocracy were published, she bought up and burned the remainder of the first edition. It was her *auto-da-fé* in defence of many friends who could no longer defend themselves—an act which befitted her as one of the surviving links with a time and a régime which is now engulfed for ever.

CHAPTER II

ETON COLLEGE

THE English public school and the national character lie at each other's roots. The English school has played as great a part as the German schoolmaster within the empire that each has helped to build. Sedan was the victory of the latter, just as Wellington said Waterloo was won in the playing fields of Eton.

In America and England the public school is different. The American institution imposes a free education on the children of citizens. In England only the parents of a certain caste or fortune can afford to send their boys to a public school. The school of the poor is "the board school," but its pupils may not call themselves public-school men in after life. That is the proud distinction of those who have been to Eton, Harrow, Winchester, Westminster, and Rugby—the planets of the system—or to one of the fifty subsidiary schools that follow in their wake. The

public-school system is traditional and caste-making. The men from the public schools form the distinctive class between the hereditary gentry and the mob. They are the bulwark of the profession and of the services. In peace time they maintain the customs and practice of sport. But the Great War has put their system on trial. The new armies are largely officered by public-school men.

My school experience was the same as that of a generation born in the eighties and nineties, who were therefore of cannonable age at the outbreak of the war. Even if my contemporaries had not been for the most part cut down in their flower, we should have all agreed that school-time was the best phase of life. In memory of man English schools, private or public, were hotbeds of cruelty. Dickens helped to abolish Dotheboys Hall with a pen more stinging than the cane of Squeers, whose model in life was actually commemorated by a church window. At Harrow in the thirties my grandfather was bullied and even roasted at a fire by his fagmaster. At Eton and Rugby the customs were just as brutal. Mere children were tossed in blankets or thrashed by other boys for ignorance of the school slang.

In later Victorian days schools became as pleasant

to the boys as expensive to the parents. Luxury and sport were developed. Bullying declined to favouritism. Boys came to love their schools with a religious passion.

I went to Ludgrove, one of a score of private schools preparing for Eton. It was under Arthur Dunn, captain of the English Eleven. He was assisted by a staff of gentlemen athletes, who posed for the illustrations in the *Badminton Book on Football.* There was no suspicion of pedagogue among them, and they became the objects of our sincere hero-worship. They included "Joe" Smith, another of England's captains, who saved Oxford from defeat in the most famous of cricket encounters with Cambridge. Another was H. P. Hansell, whose courtly mien and polished French have been since devoted to tutoring England's next King. He was a connoisseur in china and a man of delicate taste, liable to be disturbed with sad wrath when a boy wrote God without a capital G. He has become a well-known character in the public eye accompanying the Prince of Wales on all occasions, even to Paris, where the irrepressible Parisians remarked that there was "more Hansel than Gretel" permitted in the prince's company.

Arthur Dunn taught us to play football as

honourably as the game of life, to recite the Kings of Judah and Israel, to love God and to hate Harrow. He died in his prime as the result of football strain—a bright and lovable memory, touching "muscular Christianity" at its highest. Yet most of his boys were doomed to die younger than he. To have been a schoolboy in the nineties was to become fodder for the war flames of the next century.

On Ascension Day, 1898, the school flag was solemnly lowered. Mr. Gladstone was dead, and a solemn hush overspread the school, though some of us, scions of the landed class, felt that the devil had taken his due. It marked as well as any date the end of the Victorian era of which jubilees were the climax. Henceforth the empire, glutted with a seventh of the globe, was to experience difficulty and even the symptoms of disaster. The following year brought the Boer War, in which loss of fame was ill concealed in farce. By the time the tears, recriminations, and laughter aroused by the war were finished, Queen Victoria and the century associated with her name had passed to the historians.

Meanwhile, with the aid of a little Latin and less Greek, I was making my way through Eton, greatest if no longer the most select of the public

schools. Eton is a traditional republic of a thousand boys divided into twenty houses, each enjoying separate government but federated for purposes of sport and study, not unlike the United States of America. The school is ruled by a society of athletes drawn from all the houses, who stand in relation to the headmaster as the Senate of the United States stands to the President. The head is chosen not by the votes of the school, but by a governing body. However, as an inclination to democracy he cannot use the birch until it is presented to him formally by the boys themselves.

In the matter of education, Eton does not educate so much as initiate. She takes no pride in conferring a sound commercial training. Only one of my contemporaries has since "made his fortune," which he did while still in his teens by making an early corner in picture post-cards to the mild amazement of his instructors. Eton invests boys with a social stamp entitling them to enter the free-masonry of English gentlemen. Of this much-envied and much-decried society there are roughly three ascending degrees recognised unofficially throughout the empire.

1. "Sportsmen."

2. Sportsmen who have been at Oxford and Cambridge.

3. Old Etonians.

I fear that old Etonians have tended to seclude themselves in a caste by themselves. It is the defect of a social quality. It is Eton's pride that she produces men and not "mugs," guiding statesmen and not pushful politicians, viceroys and not commercial nabobs, and on a lower scale after-dinner speakers rather than orators, hunting parsons rather than mystic theologians. Nevertheless, she reared Pusey, the chief theologian of the age, and Labouchere, a pure wire-puller. Her training befits a future chancellor better than the bank-clerk *in posse*. The Etonian prefers graceful dignity to an intellectual study. It was typical for a most brilliant son, Randolph Churchill, to refer to decimal points, when Chancellor of the Exchequer, as "those damned dots!" Not unlike Castlereagh, who is said to have given up Java because he could not find it on the map. The exact sciences have never appealed to English gentlemen. They have left clerkship and surveying, like sanitation, to the middle classes. It is a pity that the public schools do not produce the scientific or efficient spirit. It accounts for German successes in commerce and in war.

There is no modern side at Eton. Modern languages are a side-show. Science, irreverently

called "stinks," is taught rather like the accomplishment of drawing-room conjuring. The main studies are Latin and Greek, which have lost their public value since the classics are no longer quoted in Parliament. Boys are served with daily rations of Latin and Greek, that are seldom absorbed with pleasure or profit. Every week claims a copy of Latin verses, which to the ordinary boy is a maddening exercise in Chinese puzzledom. Only a few reach the standard which would enable them to write Latin epitaphs for Westminster Abbey without disturbing Poets' Corner with a false quantity.

The only English poetry we learned was in the guise of Latin exercises. My acquaintance with the Celtic School dates from a feverish night turning Yeats into Latin elegiacs. To clothe lines like—

> "My brother is priest in Kilvarnet,
> My cousin in Maharabuie"

into Ovidian measure is like Dr. Haig Brown's *tour de force* in putting Euclid (Prop. I) into Latin verse!

The classical curriculum produced the refined scholarship and literary taste which were so much acclaimed in the eighteenth century. The art of

apt quotation had a public value, and Etonians led the way in applying Horace and Virgil to modern contingencies. Ever memorable at Eton was the reply of a master who had been skating on a flooded field (called by us Philippi) in the words of Horace—"*Philippis versa acies retro*" which can be exactly rendered—"Turning the outside edge at Philippi!" As brilliant was the flash in which someone discovered the Greek for "muscular Christianity" in Thucydides—*Philosophoumen aneu malakias* (We are lovers of wisdom without softness).

Apt turns to Scripture were equally applauded. When a boy accused a master of needing a crib himself, another quoted from Proverbs—"The ass knoweth his master's crib." It was a tradition that "Judy" Durnford, when Lower Master, found a button in the chapel collection, which he read out in terms of pounds, shillings, and pence, "and one trouser-button!" proceeding immediately with the words of the service—"Rend your hearts and not your garments!"

It is bad taste at Eton to assume aught but a bored indifference to school work. Enthusiasm is reserved for games. To be too clever or intellectual is resented as un-English. The quality which is most encouraged and rewarded in Ger-

many is repressed in English schools by unwritten laws among the boys themselves. About one boy in ten works his hardest, and he is nicknamed "a sap," since it is folly to be wise. Unless he is also athletic he tends to become a social outcast. In my father's generation at Eton it was said that only two boys other than the annuity-receiving scholars worked hard. They were George Curzon and St. John Brodrick, who as Indian Viceroy and Minister of War have well illustrated the types of Eton genius and Eton plodder in their respective careers. Their quarrel over Indian administration is historic. Both were "saps," but Curzon had some of the "heaven-sent" and "all-highest" quality.

No English school can teach French as well as Latin. It is doubtful which teaches less, the French teacher who mispronounces English or the Englishman who talks bad French. All Frenchmen are "ragged" on a national principle at English schools. At Eton any new master is liable to traps. In my time one, a non-Etonian, was informed by his class that by old custom popular masters were hoisted round their classrooms. On hearing that the vote of popularity had fallen on him, he suffered himself to be carried about by the boys in triumph during school hours. Unfor-

tunately, he mentioned his success to an older colleague and his career was closed. Boys are cruel.

I was present on a famous 5th of November when a gentle teacher of mathematics was "ragged" by the class, who appeared in masks and played football. Suddenly the door opened and Dr. Warre, the majestic headmaster, entered. Without a word he proceeded to examine our books, on whose pages diagrams illustrating natural history appeared oftener than geometry. A ludicrous incident occurred. One of the boys struggled with it, but was unable to remove the mask from his face. With restrained anger Dr. Warre inquired his name. It was world-famous! The Head drew himself up in his robes, and sadly said in tones as of a Pope excommunicating one of his own family:

"A great old Eton name."

Then he left the room, but the effect was annihilating. Edmond Warre was one of the greatest of Eton headmasters—a Grecian and an oarsman, he epitomised English culture. His brow was Olympian, and he carried the shoulders of a prize-fighter. Out of his mouth proceeded praises and punishments with a sound of innocuous thunder. In class he often uttered platitudes as impressively

as though they came from a judge of the living and the dead.

Every morning as he passed into chapel behind the solemn file of his sixth form performing their traditional goose-step to the notes of the organ, the school rose to salute him. The light from the east window threw a sightless expression upon his spectacles, always reminding me of Œdipus stepping on to the Greek stage behind the rhythmic marching chorus. He was a grand old man, and worthy to flog future bishops and statesmen of England. I do not know how many hundreds of Eton boys slain in the battles of the empire will not rise to do him reverence among the dead. The Headmaster of Eton has more to do with the soul of England than the Primate of Canterbury. The feeling of Etonians to Eton is more akin to religion than most sentiments in the English breast. The cry of *Floreat Etona!* is the *Ave Maria* of the devotion of all who have been there.

In his old age Warre attempted reform. He tried to improve our handwriting, which was crabbed by the system of writing lines for punishment, and he issued edicts on behalf of French. Classical masters were bidden to teach it for an hour weekly (but as a dead language like Latin).

There was an underground conflict among the masters between the modern men and the traditionalists at this time, in which the latter saved the old curriculum as piously as Æneas saved the Palladium from Troy. While the boys slept the conflict raged. Some of the older men were as quaint as characters in Dickens. The nicknames and legends attached to them have been carried to the farthest outposts of empire. One of these on his retirement was presented by his boys with a grand piano in testimony of being "the slackest master in the school." "M' Tutor" is as great an institution as "M' Dame" at Eton. A boy's tutor performs a consul's rôle in helping and protecting his pupils when in trouble in other classrooms. The Eton Dame is now extinct. She was a relic of matriarchy, and equally sacred and primitive. These gifted old ladies who kept the Eton houses fostered half the heroes and adventurers of empire. Sargent's brush has luckily preserved the features of the last of them—old Jane Evans, who lived to see one of her charges Headmaster. For sixty years she had been at Eton, and her boys had filled her dining-hall with trophies from all lands. She told me she had once carried upstairs a boy of five who was sent to the Eton world in petticoats! She remembered great men

only as boys in Eton jackets. Her keen humorous eyes had taken in generations of them, and in old age they carried in consequence a look of eternal youth. To Etonians she was the second lady in the land.

Eton taught little theology moral or dogmatic. Decency and reverence were instilled instead. Boys brought their home creed with them and, perhaps, returned with its fragments. In morals, Etonians have the Englishman's right to take their own line provided they do not become prigs on the one hand or beasts on the other. Athletics purify their life. Religious services were choral—a daily draught of song and chant which Etonians take as a memory into life's drier places. The Sunday sermon was a mild appeal to take holy orders or grow up like Lord Roberts. Preachers were advised not to refer to the seventh commandment or to Wellington's historic remark about Waterloo and the playing fields. In the latter case he was liable to raise Homeric applause. On Sunday boys were made to write answers to scriptural questions, a hateful tribute to the Sabbath God which made Sunday the chosen day for smoking, or catapulting the royal rabbits in Windsor. True worship was given to athletic prowess and physical beauty. But immorality was rare. If twice in a generation a

house had been cleaned out, the inmates were rowdies more than decadents. In one case the boys solemnly hoisted a black flag as each of their number departed. Love of athletics made boys more Greek than Christian in their ideals. Only the Jesuits have ever been able to impose the supernatural on English boys. Their ideal is St. Aloysius, a delicate youth with a lily. The popular Etonian inclines to a tomboy with a cricket-bat. Aloysius would have been better for games and Etonians for the sacramental view of life. The ideal would be a combination of the two. The Reformation, while it made, also limited, English institutions.

The captain of Beaumont "the Jesuit Eton" was said to have sent a football challenge to Eton. Eton contemns other schools just as England despises the rest of the world, and the Eton captain answered: "What is Beaumont?" The reply was superb: "Beaumont is what Eton was—a school for Catholic gentlemen!"

The Eton school chorus expresses the sentiment felt toward others.

> "Harrow may be more clever
> Rugby may make more row
> But nothing in life shall sever
> The bond that is round us now."

The feud between Eton and Harrow is implacable and inexplicable. My grandfather was cut by one of his Harrow friends for sending his boy to Eton. Riots used to follow the cricket contest. I believe it represents the last trace of the war between Roundhead and Cavalier. On June 4 of 1915, Eton officers in the trenches telegraphed "Gott strafe Harrow!"

To substitute Germany for Harrow and the United States for Rugby would give a fair idea of the adult Etonian's outlook. Etonians imbibe a certain sense of the effortless superiority which haunts every imperial race. To *be* an Etonian seems better than to *become* great or successful. Boys are lulled into a sense of unassailable primacy which they extend later to the empire. We tasted a divine but careless flower, as though the lilies on the Eton shield were a kind of lotus. No Eton captain can ever be so great again as he was at school. Miss Evans used to say that Etonians tended to become great men or black sheep. Arthur Benson found the Eton boy an insoluble mixture—"Now an angel, now a demon." When Benson was an Eton master I spent two halves in his class. He seemed to be equally puzzled and saddened by the boisterous boy life about him. He feebly despised their games as they not un-

feebly despised his poetry! Though an English poet, he was compelled by the system to teach us to write verses in dead languages. He used to sit above us like some literary Prometheus with his big bushy head bowed to his desk by the system which prevented his communicating to us his own gift of divine fire. He left Eton to edit Queen Victoria's letters. I have wondered whether he found the Queen's English or our schoolboy Latin the more tedious.

It was hoped he would succeed Warre as head, but the traditionalists opposed him, and a compromise was found in Edward Lyttelton, who as a cricketer and a vegetarian was expected to satisfy the conservative as well as the advanced men.

Eton punishments were as prehistoric as the pillory. Youths of an age that would be salaried and married in America were liable to be solemnly held down on a wooden block by two assistants and minutely perforated with a birch rod, which figured for seven and sixpence in their parents' bill. Mr. Leigh, the Lower Master, was humorously called "The Flea," because he generally drew blood on these occasions. Only the blood royal was exempt, but Leigh used to make the Duke of Albany sit on the block instead. The greatest achievement of the Beresford family at

Eton was the stealing, by Henry Lord Waterford, of the Eton block, which for years was kept at their seat at Curraghmore.

The captains used canes at their own pleasure. I remember peers' sons being caned in a way that would have entailed lawsuits in a board school. Only the convict and the children of the rich have the privilege of being flogged in England. The small boys are liable to menial service. Queen Victoria gave orders for her grandsons to be "fagged" according to custom. In my time the fags included an Astor and a Drexel—family names do not impress Eton. Eton might have inquired as innocently as King Edward of a shocked Philadelphian: "What is a Biddle?"

One young nobleman's son introduced himself as Lord C——, son of Earl C——. The whole house promptly kicked him twice, once for Lord C—— and once for Earl C——. This story is capped from Harrow, where a foreign prince at the school was once mentioned as a candidate for the Spanish throne. The poor boy had to be removed, as half the school took the necessary steps to be able to boast afterward that they had kicked a King of Spain!

The athlete was the only king in the public school democracy. The prizes of youth went to

the strong. Woe to the weak and the laggard! Power and popularity greeted the rower, the runner, and the cricketer. Curiously enough, military proficiency in a boy was rated low. A boy who shot for the school at Bisley was an inferior being to one who rowed at Henley or batted at Lord's. The school volunteers were called "bug-shooters" in facetious allusion to their manœuvres in country lanes. This preference is responsible for the preponderance of bravery over strategy in Eton soldiers. Courage to die is still admired more than the cunning which entraps a foe. But the end of all Samurai is extinction.

It was noteworthy that a Japanese visitor asked only how "the spirit of Eton" was taught. It was the spirit not letters we learned.

The Etonian enters the world with a working code of honour and a knowledge of gentlemanly conduct in the rough and tumble of life. What he desires of art or music or literature he must glean surreptitiously for himself. It is sad to think of Shelley at Eton, flying from his pursuers like a baby owl mobbed by starlings in daylight.

Eton is a great Aryan as well as English institution. Reform would only complete the decay which has been caused by the admission of the sons of Orientals, financial magnates, snobs, and swindlers. The sturdy squirarchy who compose

the bulk of the Eton families have been swamped. One house has been recently known as "the Synagogue." Winchester, the sister school, has taken the precaution of excluding non-Christians. Eton, in a generous effort to keep pace with the Empire, has become as cosmopolitan as English society.

Eton has enjoyed almost a monopoly, however, in men of state and imperial distinction—apart from men of *genius*, which is ambulatory, like the Spirit, and not necessarily aristocratic.

The Etonian is the most marked among the types that spring out of the public school. His is the caste composed of ruling and adventurous, half-educated but honourable men. All professions accept his leadership except journalism and stock-jobbing, which, as subsidiary to literature and commerce, are largely left to Celts and Jews. In other professions he makes a brilliant mark, even in art and politics, the two professions giving the outsider a chance to reach the topmost level of society. Men who are not public-school men can succeed by making themselves idols in politics or smashing idols in art—a Disraeli or a Bernard Shaw.

Eton has naturally produced more poets than painters, more diplomatists than demagogues—but there are few Tory cabinets out of which she cannot man a rowing eight!

The war has tested Eton to the core, and proven

that "*Etonesse oblige.*" One of two prints hangs in every Etonian's room, the "Sir Galahad," which Watts limned for the school chapel or Lady Butler's picture of an Eton officer charging deathward to the cry of "*Floreat Etona!*" They signify one the spiritual and the other the carnal warfare, though perhaps a strife has now come in which they seem synonymous.

CHAPTER III

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

THE atmosphere of the university in England is indefinable. Oxford and Cambridge are microcosms of national history. Tradition and freedom mingle through their precincts. To the powers "that are" they are obsequious only in the choice of their chancellors, who are dukes at least. When Wellington was made Oxford chancellor, Archbishop Whately had the spirit to apply for the command of the Horse Guards. The universities may appreciate royal favour like the sunshine, but there is no sun-worship. An English university is its own universe.

The university is the only time and place in the lives of Englishmen when they show their emotions. Faith and scepticism, enthusiasm and cynicism bear sway among the young men. The undergraduate has a licence to practise his real self. As a rule, he regrets the experiment and slips into

one of the conventional grooves prepared for him. Only the idealist continues to be an undergraduate through life. The English environment is one which brings rockets to dark earth. The torches of English civilisation are safety-lamps which warm without consuming their carriers. They are passed on by one generation of common-sensed officials all over the empire to another. They are cherished at home by a semi-athletic caste of clergy and a half-humorous type of lawyer and legislator—in other words the university class. By such the empire is managed if not uplifted—as a department store rather than as a spiritual force. The cream of university men includes the educated part of the upper and the upper part of the educated class. These men reach success and honour. Everybody who is not in the university class had better be a duke or a salesman, only these can afford to be without a degree.

The colleges at Oxford and Cambridge form a mosaic of English history. If they are winged by modern science they are also weighted with tradition. They are democratic unto themselves, but their tendency is to make a caste. The experiment of bringing Rhodes scholars from all over the world to Oxford or Indian *babus* to Cambridge is doubtful. The colonials are better for their own colleges

instead of learning to imitate English sportsmen. The Indians are the worse for being educated as an equal race in England by way of prelude to being ruled as an inferior one in India. I recall an Indian at Cambridge saying:

> In India I was taught that white men and women were sacred. But for three years here I have been cadged by English porters and prostitutes for the price of beer.

A few more sentimental mistakes, and Oxford and Cambridge will pass like old English boxing and London society itself into the shadowy vale of cosmopolitanism.

The education at the university is more intelligent than scientific. The individual is allowed to develop by himself even at the hazard of indolence. Facilities are afforded but no system is imposed. A man may accept the facilities and make the best of them, or he may start a new school. There are no official schools of thought. Anybody is only too welcome who will think at all. I have known no Cambridge teacher who did not confess that the German training was more up-to-date and organised. Provincial universities like, for instance, Leeds and Liverpool, are more practical. London University is far more thorough. The German university is a grinding-mill compared to

the loose-flowing moulds at Oxford and Cambridge.

Oxford and Cambridge! *quis separabit?* They are the sacred twins suckled by one *alma mater*. They have set the tone of English life, and embalmed every phase and period of her history. It is difficult to state the real difference between the rivals. It is a divine truth that Cambridge men are Aristotelians and Oxford men Platonists. Cambridge is scientific where Oxford is mediæval. If Oxford is called "the home of lost causes," the Cambridge of Newton, Harvey, and Darwin has some claim to be the home of discovered ones. Yet, curiously enough, the great stream of English poetry flows from Cambridge—Chaucer, Milton, Spenser, Gray, Wordsworth, Byron, Tennyson! Oxford can only point to a solitary Shelley, whom she was careful to expel for atheism!

But Oxford's bead-roll is in religion. Cambridge cannot match Grosseteste, Wolsey, Wesley, Keble, Manning, and Newman. Alone among northern universities Oxford begat a Pope—Alexander V, whom envious Cambridge men insist to have been the sixth of that name.

The universities keep to the old tradition. With responsive spirits they leave a perennial influence, which, without being philosophical or sentimental,

has proved the seed ground of all that is most generous in English life. Against backgrounds that are material and uninspired, the university for ever points to higher and nobler ideals. Every "varsity" man carries away in some measure amongst the husks of knowledge, the certainty that there are less things saleable in heaven and earth than the advocates of sound commercial education would suppose.

Oxford is only a street that is not straight, winding under a canopy of towers and bells, but saint and cavalier, scholar and adventurer have trodden and loved it above the broadways of all the world. Cambridge is only an ecclesiastical hamlet planted on a fenland brook, but the poets of England have watched their youth slip by with its muddy stream. . From Cambridge, too, came the poet of the Great War.

I was at King's College, Cambridge (1904–8). King's was considered by affectionate King's men as "The Cambridge Balliol." Candid friends considered it "Balliol without Balliol men." There was some truth in a saying, which confirmed another to the effect that modern Cambridge has been "the grave of genius."

The men of Balliol have obtained an uncanny share of success even among Oxford men. Jowett,

their great master, seemed to be able to stamp his pupils with intellectual efficiency in class, followed by an effortless superiority when they entered the world. His pupils included Milner, Curzon, Lansdowne, Grey, Asquith. The Balliol type succeeded because it did not pitch its ideal too high. Self-sufficient and self-supporting, their combined advance in Church and State culminated in the hour that Premier Asquith gave Cosmo Lang the archbishopric of York. The age which bowed the knee to Balliol approved the transaction. A day was to come testing that ideal by trial, not as before by success. Balliol stands or falls by Asquith's premiership.

King's was very different. We were as intellectual and our Greek scholarship was better—but we had not produced a great man since Sir Robert Walpole—excepting, perhaps, Stratford de Redcliffe, "the great Elchi," and the disastrous pride which led to the Crimea and a pro-Turkish policy. King's men were less practical and more abstract than Balliol men. The type has been sketched by one of their number, Mr. Wingfield-Stratford:

He has studied Socialism with Plato and heresy with the Fathers; he has found the higher thought in the valleys of the Yang-tse, and evolution on the shores of

the Ægean. Though a fighter and an idealist, the catch-words of clique and party leave him cold . . . too responsive to genius to miss any spark of it in a contemporary or an opponent, he is at once the fairest and most redoubtable of controversialists.

This well expresses the secret and the cause of Cambridge thinking. Cambridge men cannot or will not join or form parties. Oxford men, however, have incarnated their genius in religious movements, such as Wesley's or Newman's, or in influences upon the civil body, like Matthew Arnold's or Jowett's. The Cambridge genius always tended to a higher abstract thought, that slipped beyond theology and above patriotism. These were left to Oxford. Oxford stood loyally by the Stuarts, and she maintains religious orthodoxy to-day. Perhaps one terrible sentence will discriminate historically between the twain. Cambridge produced the reformers and Oxford burned them.

Life at King's was an inspiring but disarming experience. As a result of high thinking, the finished King's man acquired the seeds of dilettantism. He entered the world a little sceptical, a little doubtful how far the battle of life was worth fighting. He was unfitted by the previous and supreme struggle, for knowledge for knowledge's

sake. Nevertheless, there were many King's men who tried to practise a definite idealism.

The society at King's consisted of some thirty dons and a hundred and fifty undergraduates. The teaching staff was good but eccentric. The best of them taught by inspired intercourse rather than by formal lectures. Walter Headlam, for instance, who did more than all Tübingen and Göttingen to restore the Greek text of Æschylus, could only instruct select groups of explorers in his own rooms. On a late afternoon they might discover him dressing, for the day and the night were alike to him; and, like Mrs. Cannam in Dickens, he could not distinguish between winter and summer. He ate when he happened to be hungry, and lectured, like an Athenian sophist, when confronted by the seeking ignorant. Set utterances and horal meals he scorned as impediments from which his clear spirit had been emancipated. The floor of his room was knee-deep in books, folios, and papers. Unopened correspondence lay stratified between one week's book reading and the next. A youth was once simple enough to show up a copy of Greek verses overnight. In the morning Headlam only remarked: "I am afraid it is lost for ever!"

Headlam used to sit in the midst of the strata balancing an ink-pot on one knee and scribbling

words into Greek texts, missing since the Renaissance, on the other. His famous emendations, in exquisite script, were allowed to float about the room until gathered for the *Classical Review*. A year later they became the prey of German editors. Headlam was of those who knew too much to be able to finish a book conscientiously. If a commentary was pushed into his hand he would discourse divinely on two or three lines of poetry—but woe to the commentator! It was exciting to pupils to learn that text-books, which lecturers were solemnly commending elsewhere, were riddled with idiotic pedantry. Headlam's assaults on Verrall were famous in the annals of literary duelling. He possessed that rare brilliance typical of English scholarship, which is content to leave theoretic spade-work to the Germans, while mercilessly criticising their practice. To him the German editors were only guessing what Æschylus *ought* to have written, but *did* not. Headlam's work recalled Cornewall Lewis's deft attacks on Niebuhr's *Roman History* and Porson's amused contempt of a German rival:

"The Germans in Greek
Are sadly to seek.
Save only Hermann
And Hermann's a German!"

Even *Liddell and Scott's Lexicon*—the lantern which guides the Anglo-Saxon race in its study of Greek—fell under Headlam's lash. At the time of its revision, he made a celebrated offer to the Oxford University Press to point out a distinct blunder on every page! He gave his pupils that information which is not in books. He could discuss the Eleusinian mysteries with illustrations from the Bible, or point out the Wagnerian *motifs* underlying the Greek choruses—things hidden from grammarians and the blind race who set examination papers for the blind. I can hear him explaining the witchcraft in the *Persæ* as though he believed in sorcery, or trying to strum the lost music of the *Agamemnon* on a hired piano.

In his fragrant enthusiasm and his exquisite sense for the lost voices of Hellas he was akin to Shelley—save that he preferred to write his poetry in Greek, which he considered an easier language than English! A real parallel lies between Headlam and Porson—England's finest Grecians. Each waged controversies of scorn, and, by brilliant emendations, each won the clever perversion of "splendid *emendax*" for Horace's *splendide mendax*. Exactly one hundred years after Porson, Headlam died, leaving unfinished the Æschylus which he had dedicated to Swinburne eight years

before. He was very fond of Swinburne's letter of reply to the effect that he regarded the Orestean Trilogy "as probably on the whole the greatest spiritual work of man." He used to point out to us how Swinburne was often impeded in his English verse by thinking in Greek! With him perished something very old, and yet very young.

Another King's don upon whose lips men hung wonderingly was Lowes Dickinson, who was understood to be able to inculcate a prose style under guise of a teacher of history. He was a good metaphysician, but the effect on his hearers was agnosticism, and on his imitators conceit. He slowly drowned the Christianity of the college in intellectual cream. But he stood out for fair play. He sounded the first note in the *Independent Review*, calling for a reconsideration of the treatment meted to Oscar Wilde. The publication of *De Profundis* in 1905 came to many like the cry of a literary Dreyfus. No recorder of the time can do other than consecrate, or desecrate, a page to that Byron *de nos jours*, who shocked and fascinated the young more after death than during life. His vogue represented less a literary phase than a kink in the Teutonic temperament. Within a few years ten biographies of him appeared in English, while German "sociologists" reduced

his sins to scientific pamphlets. Perhaps he was more guilty in word than in deed, but the national hypocrisy which trampled upon him, also raised him to the dignity of a scapegoat. Between the Diocesan school at Portora on the shores of Lough Erne, and the cemetery of Père Lachaise, was the history of the whole æsthetic movement. Wilde sipped of every cup with immunity. Had he not dared to toast a righteous nation in forbidden draughts, he had not been slain alive.

One of his sons joined us at Cambridge under a false name. Men used to criticise his father loudly in his presence to show that they did not suspect his identity. It is memorable that a son of Wilde has since fallen in France (under another name than that which he redeemed).

Discussion at King's was very catholic. Fabianism, rowing, mediævalism, Darwin, ghostly research, and our own dons were perennial topics. Our dons included Professor Bury and Sir Robert Ball—who were the skimmed cream of Dublin for English consumption. Bury succeeded Lord Acton in the chair of history, and was understood to have become a total recluse in the attempt to read Acton's library. Sir Robert Ball, known as "Zerubbabel," was chief jester in a very humourless circle. His best story pertained to a popular

lecture on "The Mountains of the Moon," which he once expected to deliver in a provincial town. As he was driven to the town hall he was faced by placards advertising him on the subject of "Earthquakes." How he gratified an English mob desirous of knowledge of the earth's crust, by deft manipulation of photographic slides of the moon, is a tale still told in colleges.

The only don outside English traditions was Sir Charles Waldstein. As Lowes Dickinson was a Cambridge version of Pater, so Waldstein was an Americanised Ruskin. It was a bold step to bring a professor from the States to teach fine art to Cambridge, but he made a most suggestive teacher. He used to ask audiences of brute-male Britons how many had ever noticed the colour of their mothers' eyes. In my time he was planning a cosmopolitan dream for excavating Herculaneum. His lectures were frequently broken by applause as he read telegrams from the latest sovereign to approve the scheme. The only other don of American training in Cambridge was Mr. Lapsley from Harvard, who put on the mantle of an English don with the autochthonous grace and ability typical of Americans placed in old English institutions. I do not think I have met a sincerer Englishman except Henry James. I sometimes

suspect that New England is the only bit of "Old England" left.

The two great and venerable figures at King's were the Provost, "Monty" James, and Oscar Browning, "The O. B." Dr. James was at the head of all mediæval palæography, and used to distract our evenings by his ghastly "ghost-stories of an antiquary" which, since gathered in book form, have thrilled Mr. Roosevelt.

Oscar Browning had known everybody and done everything for a generation. In his history lectures he could refer familiarly to viceroys and statesmen by their Christian names. The legends told of him would fill a volume. One day as Tennyson entered the great court of King's, a bulky professor was said to have run to him explaining: "I am Browning!"

"No, you are not," replied Tennyson, and walked on.

Another legend recounted that O. B. had assisted, owing to his learning and in spite of his heresy, at the Vatican council. He stood for Parliament and was defeated by his own pupil Austen Chamberlain, whose supporters followed the sage with derisive cries of "poet!"

O. B. was the perennial butt for university jokes. In my time he retired, having outlived his

glory. On Sunday evenings a rabble of the curious gathered in the rooms through which the best of the Cambridge world had passed, and listened to O. B.'s swan-song, which was a gabble of royal anecdotes accompanied on an instrument irreverently called the O. B. phone! Nevertheless, Quixote was not a greater don in his time.

It was curious how Cambridge lived on the myths of her own men. There was the great Dr. Munro, professor of Latin, who was passionately fond of figs. One year the Trinity fig-tree produced, amid much leafen travail, but one enormous fruit, which Munro tended until the eve before eating, when he affixed his card with "Dr. Munro's fig" written upon it. The next morning the fig was gone, but on the card was added: "A fig for Dr. Munro!" Who, too, can forget the memory of J. K. Stephen, the flower of King's, who died young and mad, leaving behind him two memorable lines desirous of a better country:

> "When the Rudyards cease from Kipling
> And the Haggards ride no more!"

Among the younger men was a brilliant inconsequential being, Wingfield-Stratford, who wrote a remarkable *History of English Patriotism*. It amounted to a rise and decline of the British

Empire (haunted by fear of the decline), and written in the torrential and personal style of late Victorian.

King's perhaps attained a zenith when Wingfield-Stratford was correcting his last pages in the same building in which Rupert Brooke was touching his early sonnets. Neither was then known outside the college gates. Brooke has since been saluted as a poet in two hemispheres. Yet it will be rather as a dawn star than as a harvest-moon that his light will shine. He was cut down on life's threshold, like a knight errant beating on the door that others will open. To King's men his death came with the pathos of the death of a relative or a child. We felt the same sickness at heart that we would feel on seeing a lark shot to earth as it rose in song, when we read Brooke's name in a casualty list. We could have spared half our "distinguished men of letters" for him.

Well I remember the first day I saw him at King's—on the football field. Suddenly a freshman with long and not unhyacinthine locks, was seen to tear through the muddy scrum. It was Rupert Brooke, and we paused in our game to observe this semblance of a Greek god in a football shirt. "And did you see Shelley plain?" another age will ask.

Brooke's first public appearance was as the messenger in the *Eumenides*, which was played in the original Greek in the Michaelmas term of 1906. With his clarion, buskins, and classical dress he looked like a youthful Gabriel "winding God's lonely horn." He was one of those people who could not help looking picturesque.

It was a glory for King's that Rupert Brooke and Edward Busk should have been contemporaries in her gates. When Brooke was sending his first sonnets to the *Westminster Gazette*, Busk was amusing us with "the new sport of motor-bicycle making," as we called it. He was the most promising engineer of his year, and solved the problem of aeroplane stability under a high wind in a manner that gave the English command of the air. Both met early and tragic ends. Brooke was buried in an olive grove in the Greek seas. Busk was incinerated in his blazing car hundreds of feet above the ground.

Besides real genius, which necessarily attains fame, there was a band of enthusiasts with us, who won such honour as comes from the breach of conventional methods. Men who were revolted by the sterile agnosticism or careless national sense in our midst. Youthful charlatanism took curious forms. In my time two champions of Christendom flung

themselves at the prevailing infidelity, and afterward became insane. One sacrificed his career to found a sect, and another attempted to disprove materialism by rather gruesome experiments in psychical research. In the name and cause of the disparaged Deity, he ventured to raise the most famous of college ghosts, which had long and quietly inhabited rooms at Corpus.

The undergraduate tendency led men to extremes before they subsided into ordinary life. Enthusiasts who persisted in their enthusiasms were liable to be discarded. If they were prepared to go into the wilderness they might go alone. Men like Father Hugh Benson, Leo Maxse, and Ernest Edghill had recently gone from Cambridge against a mocking world. Benson threw his vivid personality into the Catholic cause. Edghill, the finest theologian of his day, who was said to have composed his Hulsean lectures in the train overnight, wore away his short days wrestling with the social danger in the slums. Leo Maxse scented and denounced the German peril for ten years before the war. As editor of the *National Review* he endured all the pangs and triumphs of Cassandra. The more hysterically he told sooth the more bitterly he was repelled by those who preferred smooth-lipped prophets. The *National*

Review played a historic part in those days, not unlike that of the *Anti-Jacobin* under Canning's editorship, in stimulating feeling once against Napoleon and the French. Maxse has lived to be justified, but Benson and Edghill died like candles in a high wind by the wayside. Edghill was the protagonist in a fierce fight as to whether the King's College Mission should be Christian or ethical in character. As the Christians drew into rival sects, the agnostic element triumphed. Rome naturally offered a Gordian solution to many under such circumstances, and Benson certainly proved a flower among controversial thorns.

It seemed strange for the son of an Archbishop of Canterbury to become a Catholic priest. Yet never was chrysalis hatched with such jubilant celerity as when the Benjamin of Lambeth Palace became a freelance in the service of the Vatican. As a curate in Cambridge he uttered an ascetic note in the home of "muscular Christianity." Yet he exactly appreciated the mixture of fear and fun which goes to the making of true religion. With fecundive fervour he poured forth a series of novels which may be described as the Epistles of Hugh the Preacher to the Anglicans—to the Conventionalists—to the Sensualists, etc.

I can see him sitting in the firelight of my room

at King's, unravelling a weird story about demoniacal substitution, his eyeballs staring into the flame, and his nervous fingers twitching to baptise the next undergraduate he could thrill or mystify into the fold of Rome.

His career was that of an ecclesiastical Winston Churchill, with whom he offered a parallel even to the stutter in his speech. Yet both could command the irritated attention of elder men when they spoke. In each case a father's son made a famous father memorable for his son. It was Archbishop Benson who gave Anglicans their watchword in resisting "The Italian Mission," and Randolph Churchill who taught the Tories to chime: "Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right." It was a curious *dénouement* to hear the sons of both reversing the wisdom of their fathers. Winston preached Home Rule in Belfast, and Hugh Benson upheld the Pope in Cambridge—instances, both, of the old Greek word *peripateia*, which may be translated, the somersault divine!

The King's man was perhaps a type, but the Cambridge man ran out of a more general mould. It may be queried what he had to show at the end, and how he has proved in the day of national trial. The ordinary degree man leaves Cambridge with a certificate enabling him to step into the

clerical, legal, or teaching professions, but each individual must find out himself as well as his profession, and then how to profess it. He is better equipped physically than scientifically. Sixty per cent. have passed through the training necessary to athletics. Athletics do count first in university life and the authorities submit. Perhaps they prefer to turn out normal, clean-limbed men to a horde of pedants and professors. To win a dark or light blue at athletics gives men an unassailable distinction through life. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. McKenna, learned to count as bow of the Cambridge boat. Picked parishes and legal partnerships drop into the lap of athletic heroes, which is logical in a land where boat-race day is a national event, and Empire Day a recent creation of faddists. The Oxford or Cambridge rowing blue touches the high-water mark of the Aryan race. The rowing coaches were subsidiary gods. The whole university could be divided on a matter of oarsmanship. To the nation it was more important that Cambridge should defeat the Harvard eight which appeared on the Thames in 1906 than that the House of Lords on its banks should be saved.

Ideals hold sway at Cambridge, but the strenuous life is not abhorred. In my time the most

famous exponent of Rooseveltism offered two wagers to the effeminate. To row against anybody the seventeen miles to Ely, and then run the full distance back, or to walk a greater number of miles in the day than any one could eat eggs.

The Great War has not found university men lacking. No genius or strategist has arisen from the academic ranks, but by scores and hundreds varsity men have left their office stools to take command of companies in the field as readily as though they were football teams. They have shown themselves efficient, chivalrous, and fearless. The losses which have befallen them are greater proportionately than in any other class. University traditions may perish as they perished in America during her Civil War—the science of English rowing may be lost in foreign graves—but the great universities will not have worked or played in vain!

CHAPTER IV

THE DYNASTY OF HANOVER

To the English their dynasty is an institution on a par with the Church or the Bank of England—consecrated by the one, paid for through the other. But to Eton, the owner of Windsor Castle is a neighbour. Eton herself is royal, and her chapel, like the particular ecclesiastical sense of Berwick-on-Tweed, needs special mention in the State prayer-book. Harrow was founded by a yeoman, Winchester by a bishop, but Eton by King Henry VI. Eton's feast is the 4th of June—the birthday of the simple-souled George III, who had an affection for Eton. To this day every Eton boy, even of American blood, wears a mourning-band round his hat in his honour, just as bluejackets still wear black scarfs for Nelson.

The dynasty of Hanover was German, and the Teutonic guttural has never quite left the throats of its descendants. For constitutional or imperial

purposes the dynasty proved admirable. Yet, both George I and George II were aliens, who had achieved nothing besides making Hanover "a coarse Versailles." Summoned to England, they initiated with some reluctance that long epoch of comfort, not without glory, from which the empire really dates. If their House seemed a stupid parody of the Antonines, their empire exceeded the bounds and prosperity of the Roman. The Georges changed climate but not manners. They consented good-naturedly to wallow in the golden trough provided by their English destiny. Thackeray could not be received at court for describing the nature of their wallowing. Nevertheless, their mediocrity satisfied England. George I was only a stop-gap—a periwigged scare-pope. George II had some dapper bravery, though his horse bolted with him on the field of battle. George III watched with dull piety his kingdom swell into empire of the world. Yet "Farmer" George saw her through her death-struggle with Napoleon before he died of imbecility and old age. George IV was a pure scamp, and William IV a noodle. After these came the Victorian era.

Victoria touched constitutional excellence, and her Prince of Wales became the best of imperial

presidents. Under Edward VII the sovereign became almost too popular, for it is an unwritten law that he should not absorb the sentiment due to his ministers, who cannot without it run the King's business. It was a relief to some when his dictatorship of tact was succeeded by George V. England's ideal is to hail her own common multiple of qualities on the throne.

Of Victoria who shall speak? Already she is a myth and a legend like Queen Elizabeth and Florence Nightingale. *Diva Victoria.*

She was unspoiled and unimaginative, with a genuine gentleness, which in the eyes of the people assumed the aspect of a halo, and with touches of prejudice and severity, which similarly passed for wisdom. Her etiquette was pedantic. She kept her mother standing in her presence, and dismissed a venerable lord-in-waiting for slumbering on duty. When an unhappy officer of the Guard once risked a slightly improper story at her table she insisted on its repetition and remarked in the icy silence which followed: "We are not amused!" Her era was moral. Her own family were awestruck of her, but she showed herself big-hearted to fallen sovereigns and old servants. She repaired the tomb of the last Stuart King in France and welcomed the last Napoleon to England. To a Scotch

gilly, John Brown, she extended real favour, and even consulted him on public affairs. He was a rough-grained fellow, complaisant when sober and rude when drunk. He became the aversion of the royal family and ministers of state. It was no sad day for them when they could realise that "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave"—though the Queen mourned.

However, she wrote an epitaph for his memory surpassing what she had written for Disraeli. Disraeli, according to the royal pen, was "a dear and honoured memory," but John Brown was "God's own gift."

The reign of Victoria was an era in itself. She was lifted, before she died, to the summit of a period in world history, the first steps of which she had mounted as a graceful girl. She became England's fairy godmother. She waved her sceptre in odd corners of the earth like a wand, and they became hers. Under the shadow of her throne rose the Victorians—two generations of statesmen, soldiers, poets, and divines. Individually they were not as brilliant as the Elizabethans, but they were more continuously remarkable. It was something that early Victorians could hail a day when they saw "a Newman mould the Church and Gladstone stamp the State." Prosperous

times had set in at home, tempered only by thrills of minor disaster on the far-away frontiers abroad. The conditions produced a supply of great men. After Victoria the mould broke. The great Victorians died off in the 'nineties. Alone Ruskin and Chamberlain survived painfully into the new century to see the failure of their missions. Ruskin could not make the English see artistically, and Chamberlain could not make them think imperially. The middle class, out of which they sprang, rejected them both.

Privately and publicly Victoria rejoiced her people. She was high-minded and stopped her ministers—even the Duke of Wellington—from swearing. Presentation at her court became a certificate in domestic morals. The light of her countenance was withdrawn from sinners who married their deceased wives' sisters. She drove Valentine Baker, her best cavalry officer, out of the army for moral misconduct. He continued his career—where men's motives are better consulted—as a Turkish pasha! She pressed the political ostracism of Dilke after his divorce trial, and marked his prosecutor, Lord Llandaff, for promotion.

She married Albert "the Good," an Evangelical German who introduced Christmas trees into

England, whereby toymakers in the Fatherland have since grown rich. He was pure, dreamy, and peace-loving. He invented Exhibitions and with difficulty persuaded the English to accept the success of 1851. The English disliked him because he was no sportsman, though the Queen, to his great distress, made him wear a kilt in the Highlands. He convinced the Queen that England must never go to war with Germany. The slightest anti-German policy he considered "wickedness." She came to regard the support of Prussia as a "holy duty." He must share the credit with Mr. Adams of once averting war with America. In private life he gave the example of the large family just as it was being discarded by the upper classes. When he stood for the Cambridge chancellorship, mocking placards were issued: "Vote for Albert—five children!" The English laughed at him until his tragic death, and then combined to erect a memorial of consummate Gotho-Germanic vulgarity. The Albert Memorial with its clumsy statuary surmounted by an image of brass, topped by cross and canopy, was not the souvenir of an unassuming prince, but the symbol of a commercial age. At Windsor his room was preserved as he left it—the hat and stick, and other possessions in grim and dusty repose. Queen

Victoria and Prince Albert were always spoken of privately by their ministers as "Eliza" and "Joseph." Lord Halifax told me "Eliza" was coined by Dean Wellesley in order to be able to refer to the Queen in her presence. But Albert was her only love, and there is a pathetic tale of "the Widow of Windsor" travelling abroad and halting her journey to kiss the keys of an organ which he had once played as a young man.

To have seen the old Queen is becoming a memory. She often drove through Eton, and when she died, the school was given the honour of lining the last lap within the castle gates at her final home-coming. For practice we were marshalled in the playing fields. The school volunteers formed a thin grey line on either side of the road backed by the rest of the school, while a derelict cab passed solemnly up and down in the guise of a hearse—not without some groaning laughter. To youth death is only less ridiculous than old age. The great day brought the usual mishaps inherent to British organisation. The royal horses shied at the station, and the new King called on a squad of bluejackets to draw the gun-carriage through Windsor. It was a solemn moment when we caught sight of the sailors bending on their

improvised ropes—the tiny coffin—and the galaxy of Kings.

In the excitement some of our volunteers forgot to reverse their arms. Generals on either side of the coffin whispered hoarsely: "Reverse!"—which the delinquents obeyed too late and in windmill fashion, almost striking heads in the procession. A few seconds later King and Kaiser were passing. I do not know if the eyes of the German war-lord caught our fiasco. He was walking with our late schoolmate Albany, who had become his subject as Duke of Gotha.

Albany had been as much chaffed in the school for becoming a German duke as Arthur of Connaught had been praised for his refusal. That Prince Arthur refused £40,000 a year and preferred to remain an English officer on a pittance strengthened the dynasty. When Albany became Gotha his Eton friends performed a mock goose-step in his honour, reducing him to tears. The next year he returned for the Queen's funeral. As he passed, he pointed out the Eton boys to the Kaiser. For a moment that keen, restless eye shot down our unmilitary ranks, as his unwithered arm covered us with a jerk. Few of the boys standing there that day in Eton suits have not since met his legions in battle.

The Kaiser must be included in the dynasty, for as an Irish genealogist has pointed out, if his mother had been a boy, he would be King of England! The cross between Anglo-Hanoverian imperialism and Prussian religio-militarism has proved pregnant. Genius it has produced in the Kaiser, not without a Neronian touch, as shown in his hatred for his mother and the false pride that plays before a burning world. He was always an *enfant terrible*. The Duke of Connaught tells how the future Kaiser was intrusted to him at Edward VII's wedding in the 'sixties. The duke wore a kilt over his bare knees. Half-way through the service he found that his amiable young nephew had crawled low and bitten him on the bare!

The Kaiser grew to be a neurotic dreamer, ill content with a safe throne, nervously conscious of the conquests and destinies that only awaited his invocation. Hence the alarms and excursions with which he troubled his English relatives. While Victoria lived he mostly dared manifest himself by telegram. Between him and King Edward, however, there grew a cordial hatred. Yet it must be admitted that he staved off the evil day as often as it was conjured up in his name by the Junkers. One true story may be given.

A few years back an English ironclad bearing English royalty unwittingly passed through the Kaiser's regatta at Kiel. To the amazement of the imperial staff the stranger passed without proffering a salute. The English had not suspected the Kaiser's presence, and were more than astonished to be followed and boarded by the indignant monarch in person. What astonished them more was that he wore yachting shoes under his naval uniform. It was not explained till afterward that, rather than receive an accidental insult before his captains, the Kaiser had scrambled into uniform and gone out of his way to extract sufficient courtesy from his relative to save appearances. In his hurry he had forgotten to change his shoes!

Another age must judge the Kaiser. History alone can tell what his share has been. It is at least a little grotesque to call him "Antichrist." Surely it was an anticlimax for Queen Victoria to have been grandmother to Antichrist!

By the time King Edward succeeded to the throne there seemed not much left to be done. He had always been kept out of politics by his mother, who showed a curious jealousy in not allowing him to succeed to any of his father's orders or positions. England's greatness at home could not be repeated, so Edward turned his mind to diplo-

macy abroad. Under his auspices as peacemaker, Europe was brought into that state of tranquil balance which always precedes a war. It is while alliances are uncertain and the dispositions of nations unpledged that peace is kept. The gamble of war remains too incalculable.

Strong dispositions breed calculations and calculations turn into challenges. Strong rulers control national dispositions and weak ones cannot control challenges. Edward was neither, but he tried nobly to corner the rising maelstrom. Who, however, can square the circle of Fate?

It fell to Edward to choose between a good understanding with Germany or with France. He preferred the latter. Trivial but world-changing influences affected his decision. By a strange irony Prince Albert's Teutonic discipline had driven him as a young man for consolation to the Parisians. There was, also, the unforgiveness of his Danish Queen toward Prussia. There was the fate which embittered his sister, the Kaiser's mother. Above all, there was the growing distrust of Germany, which he was quick to scent among the upper classes, to buoy him in proffering his historic embraces to France.

I was in France during the Boer War and during King Edward's visit to Paris. During 1901 even

appeals to "Fontenoy" did not prevent an Irishman being stoned for English. In those days "*Chamberlain Assassin!*" was the chant of the boulevards, and the suicide of Kitchener the perennial topic of the cafés. Two years later I found myself with a crowd of students from the Latin Quarter watching Edward and *Père* Loubet whirling to the *Théâtre Français* in a brougham fenced by a regiment of horse-tail-helmeted cuirassiers. It seemed a pretty pageant to us—the *Entente* going to the play! None of us realised at the time that it was the car of Destiny we had watched, encircled by long-haired furies, under whose wheels so many of the generation to which we belonged were doomed to perish. None are blinder than those who live in the white light of history, before it has been caught and dissected on the spectroscope of the historian. A similar fate awaited Paris students and Eton boys—1914 found them both of cannonable age!

The reign of Victoria was an epoch, but Edward's was epoch-breaking. Yet he only set out to be a citizen-King, and in the end everybody came to regard him as a personal friend—

"Europe's Uncle" the French called him. He recognised Labour members at Windsor, and he issued a proclamation in green to the Irish. He was anxious to sign a Home Rule Bill. He received "General" Booth, which was as startling on the part of the Faith's Defender to the High Church Tories as in another way was Roosevelt's reception of Booker Washington in the White House. He tried to omit the anti-Catholic oath at his Coronation. He made a success of racing, and he advanced the German Ghetto to court.

In the end he came to be considered a sportsman among sportsmen, a Catholic sympathiser by Catholics, "saved" by Salvationists, and a democrat by the Labourites. Among the Irish, whom he had offended on his visit as Prince of Wales by wearing Masonic regalia, there was a distinct movement "to capture the King," before he captured them! Loyal Orangemen signalised his visit by chalking "Popish Ned" on the walls of Derry. The Jews found themselves in clover. Sir Ernest Cassel, who shared the King's mentality to a curious degree, entered the Privy Council, and was generally honoured for his discretion.

King Edward's popularity never waned. Even the Nonconformists who had scourged his princely weaknesses were reconciled by his kingly furtherance of peace. To a nation of shopkeepers Edward "the peacemaker" seemed a national insurance. And all this success was due to the tact which allowed him to become all things to all men without endangering his own dignity. Tact is the gift of doing the right thing in place of the obvious. When an Eastern prince, whom he was entertaining, threw a sucked gooseberry skin over his shoulder, the King promptly filled an awkward pause by doing likewise. When the French aldermen visited Windsor, he had the name of the Waterloo Gallery changed for the day. Edward appreciated tact in others. When he visited the Catholic seminary at Maynooth, he understood that Union Jacks would be a forced offering from Irish Nationalists, and was delighted to find his attiring-room decorated instead with pictures of his own race-horses—a sincere tribute from a horse-loving people!

A good instance of tact may be mentioned in connection with Maynooth. The martyred Em-

press of Austria, when hunting in Ireland, once found herself within the seminary grounds. The president, Archbishop Walsh, welcomed her, and, noticing that she seemed a little embarrassed at moving booted and spurred among doctors of divinity, chivalrously offered a loan of his gown, clad in which she continued her visit. Her return offering was not so tactful, for she presented the Hibernian College with a silver St. George!

King Edward was a go-between rather than a statesman, a conversationalist rather than a man of letters. But he was the only diplomatist in the public service. His reading was limited. Lady Sarah Spencer told me that she used to read to Gladstone in his old age. One day while reading Southey, the Prince of Wales called and insisted that Gladstone should read a book which he rated very high. It was Marie Corelli's *Barabbas*. After an hour's reading, Gladstone uttered one word by way of comment: "Southey!"

Edward VII had keener perception for men than books. It is history how he tacitly dropped the absurd "divine right of Kings" with all its senti-

mental superstition and practical limitations. He preferred to wear the unassailable mantle of a modern president. He was certainly a better Republican than many of the Americans who thronged his court. He lived like an epicurean and died like a stoic. Neither devil nor doctor could affright him much. His sudden death left a pang of regret such as no world ruler had left since the Emperor Titus.

The parallel between the two has not been noticed. Each succeeded to a so-called Augustan age, and ruled over an Empire which was settling into comfortable stagnation. Each was accused of indulging in revelry before succeeding to the throne, and each seemed to die untimely for the happiness of the world. There went out a feeling among Edward's subjects akin to the sentiment which used to prompt the deification of the Roman rulers.

Among Catholics a myth arose that so good a King could only have died in the communion of the Church. It was rumoured that he had returned for his last illness not from Biarritz but from Lourdes hard by. A nun in the Midlands was reported to have seen his soul in the purgatory

of the just! Certain it is that good Protestants watched Father Vaughan a little anxiously during those last days! When the *Tablet* published a photograph of King Edward with Father Vaughan there was a slight *émeute* in Buckingham Palace.

George V caused no anxiety to Protestants. Above reproach, he filled the requisition form of an English sovereign. He proved a sedative in feverish times. He had none of his father's ambition to rearrange Europe. He collected postage-stamps in preference to racing-cups, and drew a keener eye on pheasants than on women. The middle classes welcomed him, and the lower ones had no apprehensions. The upper class, who were beginning to play at decadence, smiled at his domestic virtues. To many, a moral king is always a subject for satire. A king who tries to do his duty never raises that sentiment which accrues to selfish brilliance and even gallantry. Henry VIII remains the most popular of English monarchs. Fate has not been kind to George V. For the sake of the dynasty he endeavoured to win the Derby, but "all the King's horses" were unavailing. He went to the army and navy boxing,

instead of the first production of "Parsival," since "Parsival" was said to shock the Nonconformists. He tried to be a constitutional monarch, but only produced an outburst in the House. A well-intentioned effort to settle the Irish question led to a deadlock. Civil war threatened, and was only prevented by universal war. The conflict of Armageddon eddied round his throne, and he uttered well-chosen words and performed appropriate actions, though he saw the Guards off to annihilation in France wearing a frock coat and top-hat. He became a teetotaler, but his subjects left him stranded "dry." Throughout his reign he has showed himself the type intended by the settlement—a patriot King under Whig domination.

Alone among statesmen and generals he has made no blunders. He stands an unchanging and homely figurehead in the strife. His throne remains the safest if not, in view of Belgium, the most glorious in Europe. In contrast to the Kaiser's feverish omnipresence, his calm is a steady guidance, if not a wild inspiration, to the Empire.

Before the war Englishmen believed in four

things: a powerless throne, a powerful navy, the diplomacy of Sir Edward Grey, and their own form of democracy. The scene of Grey's triumphs has become the scene of British disasters. The fruits of democracy have proved unappetising in war time. The navy and the throne remain as sheet-anchors to public hope. George V has, by his unchanging calm and refusal to bow before fear or imagination, proved the fibre which resists the strain in the public mind. It is possible that he has those needful qualities, which could not be expected from a more brilliant sovereign—the qualities of stolid patience and imperturbable phlegm. The elements of royal greatness are not all glittering nor necessarily such as chroniclers prefer to chronicle. It is something that a most English type of Englishman sits upon the throne in these unstable days.

George III amused his subjects by his inability to discover how the apple entered the dumpling, but he saw Napoleon dumped on St. Helena. George V may be his subjects' best figure-head sailing through the waters of Armageddon.

A curious passage in Carlyle's *Frederick the*

Great recalls as an obstacle to Prussian plans—"Britannic George." "Suppose your Britannic Majesty," quoth Frederick, "would make with me an express neutrality convention?" But he wouldn't. History often repeats itself.

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGION OF ENGLAND

"CHRISTIAN England" is a cant term much employed by the critics and the upholders of orthodoxy alike. What it means is a disputed proposition. As a Catholic nation England partook nobly of the Crusades, and built the finest set of national cathedrals extant in Europe—thanks, indeed, to loans from the Jews, whom she treated with intermittent tolerance. The Crusaders, the Lollards, the Elizabethan High-churchman, the Catholic divines, the Puritans, and eighteenth-century bishops, who signed the articles of faith "with a smile or a sigh," have all left their mark on the national religion. A general result makes English Christianity sentimental rather than theological. It tends to save appearances rather than souls.

In public life religion makes little difference. The devotee and the anticlerical is equally rare.

The State bishops are objects of envy rather than of reverence. The depths of religious awe between a foreign Catholic and an Anglican appear in the story of the honest Briton arguing with a Frenchman and ending: "To H—ll with the Pope!" With a pallor befitting the terrible words of his reply, the Frenchman drew himself up and uttered: "To H—ll with the Archbishop of Canterbury!" Whereat the Briton dissolved in laughter. "To H—ll with the Gold Stick in Waiting" would sound as comic to him. The English Primate is a court official, and it is the Chancellor who keeps the King's conscience. Archbishop Laud was the only occupant of the see since the Reformation to press divine rather than official honours on himself, and the only one to suffer execution on the scaffold.

Reverence and common sense go to the making of English religion. "Preach the Gospel and put down enthusiasm" was a Victorian bishop's watchword. The religion taught at the great schools amounts practically to a light coat of moral distemper with a sentimental affection for the school chapel thrown in. Only Winchester maintains a religious test. A sixth-form boy can better criticise New Testament Greek, compared, say, with Thucydides, than expound its doctrines.

It is only at the university that such as are religious tend to shuffle into shades and sects. Organised effort to draw men into different doxies fail. The ordinary Englishman has not been troubled by religion for a hundred years. At Cambridge, missioners from America were received with polite amusement. In my time Mrs. Eddy won the wife of a master of Trinity, and the master of Emmanuel raised a teacup storm by distributing an unorthodox tract by Dr. Eliot of Harvard. An Oxford or Cambridge university training secures a constant stream of recruits for the Church, for it often unfits them for any other profession. To the gentleman of culture or country pursuits, the Church of England rectory affords a temptation that the dissenting manse or the disciplined Catholic presbytery cannot offer. The ideal of the English Church has been to provide a resident gentleman for every parish in the kingdom, and there have been worse ideals. In the good old days the parson read Horace and rode to hounds. Since agricultural depression has set in, the curate reads Kipling and plays football. The old-fashioned Anglicanism and dissent of England are practically dead, and parasites devour their remains. Ritualism has eaten into the core of the establishment, while sects and political societies

have dismembered Puritanism. The Catholic Church has made conquests in the upper classes, but she has leaked from the lower story.

Anglicanism is less a creed than a condition of mind peculiar to the English. Anglicanism spells an ideal of temporal followed by eternal comfort. It is the historical attempt to combine the advantages of the Catholic and the reformed faith. It implies tradition without mystery, bishops without authority, an open Bible and a closed hell. The articles of the English Church were originally articles of peace devised to enable the rival supporters of Church and Sovereign to live under one roof. Real Protestantism came later with the Puritans, and Cromwell was the first Nonconformist. Anglican doctrine changes with dynasties and fashions of thought. The ritual varies with each parish. But the Church has its place as an old-established institution, disseminating traditions of decency and honour. Even Catholics would deprecate its disestablishment as a social disaster, second only to the overthrow of the House of Lords.

The two religious movements of the nineteenth century, the Evangelical and the Catholic revivals, loosened the stakes of Anglicanism as a mere

Church-and-State preserve. The mediævalist with a taste for liturgy, the Hot Gospeller, and the critic of the Pentateuch all entered within its portals. The virtue of toleration, even of opposing beliefs, has been deduced by apologists from necessity. There is a delightful tale of a Bishop of Gloucester who ruled over High and Low Church with an equal mind, until the former presented him with a popish mitre which he promised to wear. On the expected day the Low Church gathered to protest against a bishop wearing *a hat in church*, but the wise bishop satisfied both by carrying the dangerous emblem under his arm!

There is a wonderful comprehensiveness in the Church of England. At Gibraltar or in Ulster, Anglicanism may be a different church. The Bishop of Gibraltar used to dress as a Catholic prelate, whose see was Southern Europe. "I believe I am in your lordship's diocese," was the Pope's humorous comment to him. It was the same Pontiff who answered an Anglican bishop's request by giving him the formal blessing reserved to incense *before burning*. The contretemps caused by High Church bishops travelling abroad are beyond count. The greatest sensation was caused by a Scottish prelate who went to France in the purple cassock of a continental bishop. As

he brought his wife with him, the pious innkeeper refused to allow her in.

"*Mais je suis en vacances*," explained the paragon of diocesan respectability.

"*Il n'y a pas de doute que monseigneur est en vacances*," replied the poor innkeeper to whom the situation was with difficulty explained by the chaplain.

The most curious compromise in England is that the wives of spiritual peers have no official position. This dates from Queen Elizabeth's cheery remark when the first married archbishop brought his lady to court: "Mistress I would not, wife I cannot call you."

In Ireland the Anglican bishops amounted to Cromwellians in lawn sleeves. To-day they are the leaders of a stranded Crusade and the trustees of a disestablished church. For three hundred years they preached that St. Patrick was an Anglican, until Gladstone bade them throw up the missionary sponge. Though the native cathedrals and old revenues had been made theirs, the duel had proven unequal. The Catholic Church thrived on poverty and persecution, and became more than ever the Church of the people. In contrast to elsewhere, the Catholic Church in Ireland became so identified with popular rights and opposed to

feudalism that I remember an old Catholic peer exclaiming: "We have held the faith in spite of the priests."

Anglicanism failed in Ireland because of the poor quality of its bishops. Swift said that they were highwaymen who stole the papers of the true bishops on their way over. At the end of the eighteenth century Primate Stuart wrote to Lord Hardwicke:

> Fix Mr. Beresford at Kilmore, and we shall then have three very inactive bishops, and, what I trust the world has not yet seen, three bishops in one district reported to be the most profligate men in Europe.

As late as 1822, Bishop Jocelyn of Clogher was removed from his see for scandalous crime. There were always exceptions. There was a Berkeley at Cloyne and an Alexander at Armagh, the latter of whom survived into the twentieth century, as the last of the state-appointed bishops in Ireland. When a child I recited: "There is a green hill far away" to his wife, the authoress. I was asked at the close which verse I liked best. I answered, "The last." "And why?"

"Because it is the last," I replied frankly.

When Archbishop Alexander was old and I was young we became close friends. I was sometimes left in charge of him at his palace, for he grew

very feeble. We used to drive together round the patrimony of Patrick (the demesne that disestablishment had left him) and over the crest of Armagh, where Brian Boru lies buried and the flags taken from the French at Ballinamuck hang in the old cathedral. After a peep to see how his rival, Cardinal Logue, was progressing with his brand-new structure, we used to return to discuss Greek plays and Latin Fathers under the pictures of all the courtiers, scoundrels, and good men who had ever ruled Armagh for England.

Archbishop Alexander could recall Newman's preaching at Oxford. "He was an apostle!" he used to say, and to hear him preach in St. Mary's he often went without the supper which his college had made a movable feast that it might coincide with the hour of Newman's preaching. Dr. Alexander was a High-churchman, and when he maintained the symbolism of the Cross, an Orange mob stoned his carriage in Dublin! Plunged all his life in the Irish maelstrom, he always held out for peace with principle. Old age found him undaunted and unsoured, nor had humour departed from him or his neighbour, Cardinal Logue. I wish I could sketch that quaint and venerable pair as I remember them.

Archbishop Alexander, with his round benig-

nant face and bulky frame, needed only a peruke to resemble an angelified Dr. Johnson as he laid down the laws of poetry and the church to us over his teacups. Cardinal Logue looked and thought the very opposite. Like the apostles, he came of fisher folk, and his gaunt, bony face with bushy brows planted over his sad yet shrewd Celtic eyes, made him like Granuaile or some such weather-battered personification of Ireland, in a cassock. He was a link with Ireland's penal past. He had outlived his generation and filled the sees of Ireland twice and three times over with his own hands. He told me he had sat on the bishop's bench with John MacHale of Tuam, who had been a bishop before Catholic emancipation (1829).

The interchange of humour and respect kept Logue and Alexander friends. When Cardinal Vannutelli came to consecrate the new cathedral at Armagh, Alexander left a card on the Pope's legate. The two cardinals paid the Protestant Primate a visit. As the three old men were gossiping in Latin under the roof most sacred to Protestant ascendancy, a tumult was heard in the streets, and great was their amusement on learning afterward that rival religious mobs had begun to break windows in their honour.

Cardinal Logue used to describe with some

humour the conclave which elected Pius X (cardinals are now forbidden to mention details), how he and two others came together socially and were mistaken for plotters, which indeed they were not at all, at all! And how, had he been made Pope, he would certainly have jumped out of the window!

When I became a Catholic, Archbishop Alexander sent for me, and, after a good-humoured scolding, added: "I nearly did it myself when I was your age!" He told me that almost all his Oxford friends had become Catholic priests, but what he mourned was that they disappeared. He seemed to think they drifted away like wrecks. It is certainly true that the Catholic Church made wonderful converts in those days. The pick of Oxford followed Newman, and what, indeed, happened to them all? Save for a Manning or a Ripon they were not much heard of again.

Alexander was the high-water mark of all that was best in Anglicanism. He was tolerant without being unorthodox. I remember the wrath which mantled upon his gentle old face after reading a sermon by Dean Hensley Henson. "He has blasphemed the mother of God!" They were brave words for an Irish primate to utter.

Alexander was the last of the great pulpit

orators, comprising the Liddons and the Magees, in whose wake came only the sky-squibblers and slang preachers. The slump which has been visible in the State has visited the Church. The Great War found no single great man on the bishop's bench except Gore of Oxford, who, owing to his liberal views, was barely on speaking terms with his diocese. The archbishoprics were filled by courtiers and *arrivistes*, fashionable in doctrine as in politics.

The leading Anglicans are generally laymen. Gladstone was a church reader, and tried to use his position of Premier to make theological interruptions during the Vatican council. Only the adroitness of his diplomats saved him from a foolish position. However, he apologetically sent a British ship-of-war to secure the safety of the Pope in 1870. Lord Halifax has been described as the lay Pope of the Church of England. He sacrificed a great career to lead the High Church, and to further reunion with the Mother Church of Rome, whom the High Church nicknamed "Aunty," and the Low Church "The Scarlet Woman." I once heard the present Archbishop of York humorously describe her in conversation as his Pink Aunt!

At the other pole to Lord Halifax was Lord

Radstock, who, like the famous Lord Dartmouth, "wears a coronet and prays!" Radstock was a drawing-room preacher, who claimed to have converted the old Emperor William. He once went to preach to the godless French, and was heard to entreat them publicly: "*Buvez de l'eau de vie, buvez de l'eau de vie, mes pères!*" He meant the water of life, but the witty French inquired if brandy was the English sacrament.

Religious life in England is at its best in dealing with the fœtid slums which encumber the great cities of the land. The High Church sent out men devoted and true, of whom Father Dolling was reckoned an Anglican Vincent de Paul. Though disliking ritualism, Archbishop Alexander told me he once went to confirm some of Dolling's disciples in a back slum, and that they rose up singing: "We are marching to the *goal*," pronouncing it as though it were *gaol*. "Only too true, poor fellows," whispered Dolling, who was an Irishman, across the chancel to the archbishop.

England's greatest social and religious danger lay in those slums. They remain hotbeds of disease and unrest, which are not allayed by the efforts of temperance workers on the one hand, or by bouts of drunken pleasure on the other.

Born in original gin may be said of most slum babies, one-half of whose survivors to manhood are found unfit for military service. Drops of oil are dropped on the howling ocean of greater London. Oxford and Cambridge have founded settlements of well-meaning students, but critics have reported them as only an expensive way of showing the poor how the rich live. Nevertheless, the inculcation of muscular Christianity by a band of stalwarts is not valueless, even if young burglars are sometimes given the benefit of a gymnastic training!

The present Bishop of London sprang to fame from Oxford House. Perhaps he is the typical modern bishop. For ever photographed and paraded in the papers, he can be suave and cheery to everybody. He preaches a "jolly" theology. He is fonder of making a good phrase than a point in controversy. He could not help describing the Great War as "The Nailed Hand versus the Mailed Fist." He has no pretensions except what his High Church insists on giving him. He slaps his curates on the back and calls the working man "Matey." He can crack a harmless joke about church to show he is a layman, after all, and explain to a Londoner that Christ was really more of a sportsman than a Sunday-school teacher.

The most successful of his clergy, Prebendary Carlile, once startled us at Cambridge by referring to the Good Shepherd from the university pulpit as "the Divine Fox-hunter!"

On the whole, England has but a loose hold on Christianity, which is left to the individual. The Salvation Army men have swept up the refuse of her pinchbeck Babylons, but they have won their real success as an imperial sociological bureau. The High Churches with their free gifts and lighted candles, dot the slums like Christmas trees planted artificially in a dreary jungle. It is the system of bribing souls which has lost England to the churches. Snobbery has driven away the poor. The fashionable churches count their coronets, and the middle-class chapels advertise their carpet-knights.

The Church of England reigns chiefly as a social club, with which are deposited the moral standards of society. There are more people in London society to-day who believe in their family ghosts than in the resurrection of Christ. Superstition has thrived oddly in London, as it throve in the latter Roman Empire, to the disregard of the old-fashioned deities. I have known an outgoing governor consult a clairvoyant rather than a bishop. And I once attended a *séance* in Gros-

venor Square, where the recently deceased wife of an Irish viceroy sent messages to her friends in society. High personages frequent the boudoir of Endor. I suppose there are few who have not consulted "Mrs. Robinson," the principal witch to London society. The most curious superstition prevalent is the use Protestant ladies make of St. Anthony of Padua to find lost jewels or to help them win at bridge. I have even known a relic of that saint used to help a race-horse in the Derby.

The only genuine native expression of religion is the much-derided Nonconformist conscience, which is entirely occupied with the public care of two commandments. There is no reason to consider English public men more moral than the French, except that they must be careful not to be found out. In France a politician's private life is never scanned unless a woman figures in his death, as in the sinister cases of Gambetta, Boulanger, and President Faure. But in England, public men who are caught out in their lifetime are hounded to political or actual death. On the day of judgment the middle classes of England will point very triumphantly to the three principal scapegoats they succeeded in nailing to God's barn door.

The English people will always shrink from blasphemy and try to keep respectable, but it cannot be said that there is a Christian England in the sense that there is a Christian Russia, or a Christian Ireland. The deep religious sense which underlay "Merrie England" seems only likely to return under the stress of deep national humiliation and sorrow. What, indeed, was asked by the Divine Prophet, to whom the Church of England is officially dedicated, if ye gain the whole world, and lose your own soul?

CHAPTER VI

THE POLITICIANS

THE history of modern England is the history of English politics. No growth could be more native than the legislation of compromise through compromise. Though the House of Commons has seen a gentlemanly game become a class gamble, the system remains a regulated contest between those who are in and those who are out of power. The object of each is to supplant the other with a more popular edition of each other's schemes. Once in a generation there is a struggle for principles. Over the Reform Bill, Home Rule, and the House of Lords, men were ready to sacrifice their political lives.

Ever since the Tories were unwise enough to support the Stuarts, the great Whig families have ruled England. After the Reform Bill of 1832, the Whigs took the middle classes under their tutelage. After that of 1867, Whigs and Tories

divided the working men. The advent of Irish and Labour parties spoiled the game. The old Whigs were a race of material-minded optimists, who had made their idea of liberty a tyrannous fetich. The Tories remained a secluded class, whose haughty pessimism was only relieved by occasional and adventurous bids for power. The modern Liberal is a humanised and vulgarised Whig. He has continued a domestic sentiment for aboriginal races and a foreign policy, which enabled England to lord Europe without having to pay or fight for the privilege. They are the class whom Napoleon gibed at for shopkeepers, and shop they have kept ever since under divine and sometimes royal patronage.

The Conservative party is built upon an out voted squirarchy and a State Church which is in a minority in the State. As a political force they have held terms of power, thanks to wars and war scares. They have placed their trust in brilliant adventures, ever since Jacobite days, and they have maintained the pomp and prestige of empire.

Out of the brilliant "Young England" episode they drew Disraeli. They suffered his leadership as the price of political victory, as later they underwent complete collapse for the sake of another

novus homo, Chamberlain. Disraeli's career was a romance such as no Eastern vizier or Western plutocrat could tell. He began as a pioneer in dress and an æsthete of words. It was Disraeli, and not Oscar Wilde, who wrote: "I like a sailor's life much, though it spoils the toilette!" Wilde wrote his life into plays, but Disraeli was his own actor. Wilde accused nature of copying literature, but Disraeli actually made his novels come true. In *Tancred*, written in the 'forties, he described the military occupation of Cyprus, which he carried out as a Prime Minister forty years later. As a Jew he had no compunction in threatening white Russia with black Indians on behalf of an Asiatic Power like Turkey. It was a striking but accursed policy to bring Indian troops to Europe. Unfortunately, it took root, and we have heard a minister threaten "Gurkhas to Potsdam." That a Christian Kaiser has enlisted Islam against fellow Christians cannot excuse a breach of this—the true *Aryan* heresy. Whosoever pits black against white—should be anathema! There is one Aryan race and Christ is its prophet!

Disraeli alternately flattered and fascinated England. He began his career by writing a revolutionary epic in the plains of Troy, and he ended by capping the solemn British Constitution

with an Oriental tiara. The day of his death was added as "Primrose Day" to the national calendar, while Gladstone's was forgotten though it coincided with Ascension Day. Disraeli's mantle was divided between Salisbury and Randolph Churchill. The former continued his foreign policy, while admitting that Disraeli had "backed the wrong horse" in supporting Turkey. Randolph Churchill inherited and perfected the ideal of Tory democracy. He made himself "Young England" rampant, and he troubled the righteous Gladstone sorely.

Of Randolph Churchill I have a slight memory. He was my uncle by marriage, and I was his first godson. He had married an American in days when such an alliance was considered as experimental as mating with Martians. His career was too brilliant to be lasting. I only remember him as the fallen ex-Chancellor, given over to haunting regrets and unattainable desires. He scarcely noticed the presence of children in the house.

In those days Winston was a fearless sandy-haired youth occupied with the custody of a moated stronghold called "the den" and the drilling of a dozen nervous boys. For Winston his father always used the dimissory mood. Few

fathers have done less for their sons. Few sons have done more for their fathers. But Randolph was not responsible for his inability to appreciate Winston's budding genius. He was suffering an agonising decline from the political world in which he once had his whole being. The story has been told with dispassionate pathos in Winston's life of his father—perhaps the greatest filial tribute in the English language. No antagonist could have passed Randolph's steel but his own reckless blade. Like a political Saul, he fell finally upon his own weapon. Vain trips were made to Africa, Asia, and America, but health and balance were denied to a brain still winged with genius and weighted with its ambitions. The collapse of an aeroplane in mid-air is always more terrible than the overturning of a hackney-cab in the street. Randolph fell from meteoric heights, and men wondered as much as they pitied.

In the schoolroom at home we tasted strange fruits, like the fruits of the Bible, which he brought back on his travels, and the youngest of us played with Oriental dolls he had remembered to buy for us. During his dying dash through Japan he purchased whole emporiums with the magnificence of the reputed milord. Eccentric though he became, it is said that the Orientals

did not find him madder than other Englishmen! I do not know anything nobler than his wife's devotion during his agony. Together with a doctor she accompanied him on that nightmare trip round the world, exposed to the lynx eyes of the Press and the subtler advances of disease. She attended him to dinners, where he was liable in his speech to substitute well-known truths for conventional courtesies, and she cheerfully crossed the tropical seas, though it was necessary to include a leaden casket among their baggage. I cannot withhold this tribute from my aunt's devotion, though she has since achieved more mundane fame as the editor of the first magazine de luxe, as a playwright, an exhibition organiser, and the captain of a hospital ship.

Early in 1895 Randolph returned, and died amid a burst of sympathy such as was accorded to Byron, whose genius in some ways his resembled. Endowed with brilliances of verse and speechcraft respectively, they were the spendthrifts of their own minds. Intractable to would-be superiors, contemptuous of native stupidity, and careless of conventions, they amazed a bourgeois England. Rejected at home, they were hailed as dazzling types of their race abroad. Keenly alive to adventure, they trailed the bleeding pageant of their

lives overseas. Finally, they wore themselves out in impossible causes—Byron in the attempt to achieve freedom for a worthless Greece, and Randolph in the yet forlorner hope of associating genius with the policy of the Tory party.

The people cheered Randolph because he was domineering, utterly fearless, and a little unscrupulous. As a schoolboy he had shown the same traits. At Eton he had three fags whom he used to summon by a system of knocks on the floor—one for Trower, two for Frewer (my informant), and three for Beresford-Peirse. He once ordered Frewer to write out some lines he had incurred as a punishment. As a result, Frewer could not do his own work and appealed to his fagmaster. Randolph sent for all available Greek and Latin lexicons, and, secreting Frewer at the bottom of the stairs, hurled himself down with the lexicons, and disappeared. Result—the dame ran out and found Frewer suffering from an apparent accident which incapacitated him, in her opinion, from going to school.

Randolph's form of exercise consisted chiefly in painting the Marlborough arms over his fireplace.

In many senses Randolph was not a Victorian statesman, but he knew how to employ a tart and

careless truth of speech, which often made Gladstone's involved wisdom appear more involved and less wise. In France he would have played the part of a Boulanger, and in America, perhaps that of a Roosevelt. Though he mocked all that was dear to bourgeoisie, he came nearer than any of his generation to the "Merrie England," which, deep under Puritanism and the Nonconformist conscience, still underlies English character. He was not afraid to call his fellow ministers, W. H. Smith and Lord Cross: "Marshall and Snelgrove," or to brand Gladstone as "the Moloch of Midlothian." His dream was for the old-fashioned Tory party to be sustained by the votes of the crowds who vibrated to his voice. But from Tory democracy both his party and himself came to be disillusioned, and when he slipped, his own legions trod him underfoot. With cynical candour Salisbury accepted his resignation, because, as he said, he had always thought him mad.

I can remember Lord Salisbury at the memorial service for Randolph in Westminster Abbey. He seemed only to need a white ruff and a velvet doublet to become one of those Elizabethan statesmen who knew so well when to wait and when to act, when to bite and when to swallow—whose speech sounded most generous when it was most

ironic. An Abbey requiem is the most impressive rite left to England. The organ tones seem to touch the statues of the mighty dead to attention, and for a moment the dull glow of tapers casts a flicker upon their viewless eyes—as yet another memory is added to their oblivion.

Randolph had foreseen some such scene in a cynical mood, and had even prophesied what a charming letter Gladstone would write to his widow, proposing burial in the Abbey. He was happier buried near Blenheim.

And here it may be noted as a characteristic of dying chivalry in English politics, that no one paid more deference or attention to Randolph's last broken speeches than his old rival, Gladstone. It may be recalled that when Lord Tweedmouth suffered mental breakdown while speaking in the Lords on Campbell-Bannerman's death, no one in politics or the Press took the slightest advantage.

The Tory party could raise no new star after Randolph, until they adopted Chamberlain, an ex-Republican, who had shocked their fathers even more than Disraeli had amused their grandfathers. His advent followed curious sequence. When Dilke and Chamberlain together formed Gladstone's Radical wing, they could pull the old man

unto restiveness. An accidental divorce case dislodged Dilke from public life, and Chamberlain found himself less powerful alone. He was glad of the Home Rule issue to change parties, but his subsequent policy of tariff reform ruined both himself and his new party. It was not tariff reform so much as imperial unity which sprang from the Boer War. Chamberlain, who began as a Unitarian Sunday-school teacher, brought down the pillars of the House of Lords in his fall. Tragic ends befell the last of the Victorian statesmen—Churchill, Parnell, and Chamberlain. Failure grim and even ghastly clouded their deathbeds. Chamberlain, the last of them prematurely stricken down, died after a long illness a few weeks before the Great War was to test the lands he had dreamed to make an empire.

Churchill and Chamberlain bequeathed their sons to the Tory party. It would be difficult to say which created the greatest difficulty to that party—Winston Churchill by leaving or Austen Chamberlain by remaining. Winston I knew ever since he was the *enfant terrible* of a home circle. As a boy he was untidy, unmanageable, and quick of speech. When he returned from Harrow with a torn jacket he replied to all remonstrance: "How should I not be out of elbows,

when my father is out of office?" His adventurous spirit fastened on *King Solomon's Mines* as his favourite reading. He read it twelve times, and once drove its author "haggard" in the course of a cross-examination. "What did you mean?" he insisted on one disputed point, and the author confessed he did not know himself. Once Winston was taken to the Tower of London, but declined both train or 'bus as too prosaic a means of conveyance. Finally he sent cheerful word home that he had started "with a drunken cabman and a frisky horse!" The secret of his soul is adventure.

Though his Harrow master, Bishop Welldon, prophesied his future success, just as Bishop Sam Wilberforce had prophesied it of Randolph, Winston learned as little at Harrow as his father at Eton. He showed his typical courage there by embracing his old nurse amid the mockery of the school. Under his fighting mask he always carried a generous heart. I think he was the only Minister of the Crown whose eyes filled with tears in the House at the declaration of war.

He was self-educated, for he was never sent to a university. He went into the army, and taught himself literature and history in his tent at night during his campaigns—of which he

rapidly saw four on three continents. During the Boer War he came down to Eton and gave me the best advice I have ever heard on education: "Do not turn your mind into a damned ammunition wagon, but into a rifle to fire off other people's ammunition." When he entered politics, journalism lost a vivid pen. The combination of American and Marlborough blood across the ages, produced what might have been a super war correspondent. No individual in the Cabinet knew the smack and taste of war as Winston, who was one of the few Englishmen who could appreciate Mary Johnston's wonderful impressionist novel of the American Civil War—*Cease Firing*. He found it so true to war's details that he could not understand how a woman could have written it.

His career is the most brilliant in recent politics. The best English politicians are necessarily adventurers. They can only enter the lists after duel with the most powerful antagonist in sight. Disraeli sought out Peel, Randolph Churchill challenged Gladstone, Lloyd George won fame by bearding Chamberlain in his den, and Winston fastened mercilessly on Balfour. He mocked him out of office perhaps a little bitterly, remembering his father's desertion. "Queens never abdicate"

was his final thrust when Balfour clung to power.

Winston passed from Colonial to Home Office, and from Home Office to Admiralty. He joined the Admiralty a "little navyite," but he immediately adopted serious views on sea power. He devoted himself to testing submarines rather than "teasing goldfish," as he called his attacks on plutocracy. Intimate friends noticed a change in his character. Thought succeeded ebullition, and he was the first of the Cabinet to read the writing on the wall of the world. Three years before the war he confessed his fears in private. I remember once at lunch comparing the Persian menace in Greek history to the German of our day. Instantly his face hardened.

He returned from the German manœuvres, which he witnessed as the Kaiser's guest, with one grim comment on his lips: "I can only thank God there is a sea between England and that army!" Some have since seen reason to give thanks that he had the supervision of that sea.

There were public prophets like Lord Roberts and Lord Beresford, who shouted their alarms from the housetops, but the public treated their words as it always does the speech of Irishmen. Only in time of war are the Irish of serious account.

The German war scare, dating from 1900, fell flat in England because people remembered a similar French scare, as well as the cry of "Bear," which had been raised once too often in the 'seventies against Russia.

At the Admiralty Winston found there were closer watchers and more interested critics scrutinising him than any at home. Not for nothing were his codes stolen and his ships dogged by spies from sea to sea. He realised what was coming, and he had just the time, though not all the support, necessary to put the Grand Fleet in order for the day.

His contribution to the national defence was the only part of it which, on trial, proved prepared. I remember passing through the Admiralty and the War Office consecutively in 1914. The latter seemed in a state of chaotic confusion, the passages choked with supernumerary clerks writing and feeding behind screens. The Admiralty was like a silent morgue. Only an occasional messenger passed down the corridors. In the midst sat the Lords of Admiralty before a board having on it the positions of the ships marked in miniature upon the seven seas, there beneath the gigantic wireless that communicated with them in as many minutes.

If Winston had died on the day the fleet was mobilised, he would have fulfilled the ambition, which had been his, to enjoy a decade of power and achievement. He used to say sadly of the spiritual side of life for which he had so little time: "One world is enough at a time." Though no devotee, he was reverent because he had imagination. After his escape from prison in Pretoria he confessed: "There is a God that looks after Winston." Religious intolerance was as distasteful to him as official stupidity, and he found enough of both in his party.

In the day of achievement he was replaced for unknown reasons, possibly not unassociated with public clamour. There was something very generous in the welcome he gave to Balfour, his father's old supplanter and twenty-five years later *his*. Randolph Churchill had once written from political exile: "So Arthur Balfour is really leader and Tory democracy is at an end." Winston could have noted, in his father's words: "After all, A.B. cannot beat my record."

Only dire extremity induced the Liberals to call Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Balfour out of retirement—a quaint pair. If Lord Lansdowne was the last of the Whigs, there were reasons for regarding Mr. Balfour as the last of the Tories. The

Tory leader, Bonar Law, was a colonial, and real Tories are born, not imported. Lansdowne found himself excusing the Balkan nightmare as he did the South African disasters fifteen years before. In 1900 Arnold White wrote in *Efficiency and Empire* of a supposed European war:

> Our institutions would have been found wanting. We should have listened to Lord Lansdowne . . . revealing the fact of his being "struck" with our deficiencies. In that case we should have had our Colenso, our Stormberg, and Magersfontein on a larger scale.

Fifteen years have brought them on a colossal scale. Few things have been more pathetic than Balfour and Lansdowne recalled from grass to drag the clumsy plough of coalition.

English history is an automatic repeater. The same character under similar circumstances produces the same results. Mr. Wingfield-Stratford, the most patriotic of historians, compared the England of the Crimean War with that of the eighteenth-century wars with Spain and found "the same swaggering confidence, the same choice of a safe enemy . . . a reluctant chief minister, the same criminal unreadiness for war." It was to be the same before 1914. Asquith was as reluctant to go to war with Germany as his prototype Aberdeen had been to attack Russia. It was

Winston Churchill and Haldane who convinced the Cabinet of the necessity of war in 1914. But the old tradition to be unprepared and to neglect warning had remained. From the Hundred Years' War to Waterloo all England's wars had pivoted on the Low Countries, yet at her height of world supremacy she was unable to save Belgium at her gates. Antwerp from being a bolt in the blue should have been exercising her strategy, since Gladstone wrote to his War Minister in 1870: "What I should like is to study the means of sending twenty thousand men to Antwerp with as much promptitude as, at the *Trent* affair, we sent ten thousand men to Canada."

But England has preferred to send belated expeditions to meet disasters in the East. Neither the old-fashioned Whigs nor Tories were responsible for the Government which faced the war. It was a middle-class collection with some help from Jews and Celts. A bourgeoisie is only effective under piping conditions of peace, but war requires a military aristocracy. It is not wise to abolish feudalism from civilisation, while leaving its close relative, war, in the field.

The English political system has attracted lawyers rather than business men. The glib tongue is even more successful than the ready

purse. Part of the political game is to be able to prove that whitewashed blackness is nearer white than black. Transferred to a scene where traditions and business sense can be discounted, great lawyers quickly become great politicians. The turning-point in English history found an English, a Welsh, a Scotch, and a Jewish lawyer taking turns at the wheel—Asquith, Lloyd George, Haldane, and Isaacs.

Since the opening of the century, the empire had prayed for a great man, and though Lloyd George gave the sound, and Grey affected the silence of one—the empire still prays. Grey was the trump-card and the mystery man of the Cabinet. The peace of Europe seemed involved in his discretion. "Straightforwardness" was always put forward, and deservedly, as his virtue. (See the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*) But a time has come when people have begun to ask if straightforwardness is all they require of their diplomatists or sheer courage the only quality needful in the soldier. There was an old teacher of mathematics at Cambridge who used to counsel "a little low cunning" in meeting problems. Had Grey really the foresight to foresee and the patriotism to realise that England would never have a better chance to defeat Germany? Or was he only a

diplomatic angler adrift, casting a feverish but lucky fly over the Balkan eddy? Or has a time since come when his position in the Balkans could be compared to "Parsival at a poker party"? Whether he foresaw events or not, he suffered them to do the work. He has the credit for having licked the Entente into shape after it had been swaddled by Edward VII. Between them they prepared, though they did not plot, the courses which led to the Great War. History will decide which, or whether either, can claim to be called "Edward the Peacemaker."

In default of the heaven-sent, Herbert Asquith led. Common-sensed, practical, and legally argumentative, he was the apotheosis of Jowett of Balliol. He harnessed the Nonconformist conscience and free trade to a rumbling old doctrinaire coach, if not to a fiery chariot—and in it he drove through the Lords and over the Union. A plain, blunt man fit to rule but not particularly inspired to save an empire—without much enthusiasm and with no humour to spare. Very symbolic is the story told of him at an entertainment of French delegates. Mr. Asquith wore the uniform of an elder brother of Trinity House, and this drew a query from a visitor. The incarnation of English dissent explained: "*Je suis le frère aîné de la*

Trinité !" The Frenchman bowed politely and said: "*Ah—nous n'avons pas cela en France !*"

Asquith may be judicially stupid, but he is never unreasonably foolish. He refuses to be unbalanced, for he keeps his footing to his own subjects. He is suspicious of dreamers, especially of the fervid company of "cranks and Christs." He only respects what he can understand. Everything else appears to him like so much froth on the changeful side of the world. He could not appreciate Ulster's ideal, nor the imperial dream of the jingo, nor the sentiment of the Catholic. He offended them all mortally. He would not allow the latter the simple satisfaction of carrying the Host through the London streets, and he underestimated the soul of the Ulster Protestants. I remember his cynical remark on hearing of Archbishop Alexander's dream of reunion with Rome: "He must be in his dotage." His ideal of oratory has been described as "a plain tale without any missionary fervour," which could apply equally to his life. He has the English prejudice against missionaries, whether of creeds or tariffs. Decency without humbug is his motto. His choice of Robert Bridges for poet laureate was as typical as his selection of Lang for archbishop. In each case he chose culture without mysticism.

Yet his lack of imagination proved rather a strength than a weakness. He was not aghast or appalled at Armageddon occurring during his administration. He measured events and men from the law courts, and the unveiling of history was to him like a political panorama. Common sense and practical wisdom upheld a man to whom the splendour of failure, the idealism of the fanatic, and death for a dream meant little. It was not in his blood or in his upbringing. His college teacher, Jowett, had mocked Newman, and his political leader, Gladstone, betrayed Gordon. Yet these two, Gordon and Newman, were the sweetest English gentlemen that ever trod the earth, for whose sake many have tried to love our unlovable race.

Life brought Asquith great successes without sharp trials. His son repeated his own success at Oxford. The most brilliant hostess became his wife. Ireland, Wales, and Jewry bent their necks to uphold his administration. In vain Socialist, suffragette, and Carsonite raged about his feet. Asquith's easy-chair seemed to rock above the water-floods.

With perfect equanimity he faced the world war. When the hearts of others were failing them for wrath or fear, he took his glass of port wine

and played his rubber of bridge after the day's work. He had the common sense to know that teetotalism will not vanquish the Hun. He went his way and performed his allotted business as usual. There are two public men whom the Great War cannot change to any great extent, but who were perhaps born to see England through her trouble—the lineal descendant of "Farmer George" and the favourite disciple of Benjamin Jowett.

CHAPTER VII

IRELAND AND THE IRISH

To write of Ireland among English institutions seems a *bull* or as the Greeks called it an oxymoron (sharp folly). Nevertheless, England would not be what she is without Ireland. For good or for bad, for sunshine or for rain (chiefly the latter), England and Ireland seemed doomed to cross-entanglement, with their present continually marred for the future by each other's past.

Whatever political trouble is caused by the Irish, and however many prizes of Church and State are taken by the Scotch, the English owe much to the Celtic fringe. Celtic influences have purged the Anglo-Saxon of much original Teutonism. Religion, and later the sporting spirit, passed from the Celt into England. As horse-racing came from Ireland, so golf, the grandmother of cricket, came from Scotland. It is symbolic of Irish influences that at one time the names of the leading jockeys and

Jesuits in England were drawn from the same clans—Rickaby and Maher.

Ireland is a paradox. The sages say there are three paradoxes which shall never be understood —the Trinity, Woman, and Ireland, but the greatest paradox is Ireland. She is the exception to all rules. She is the most distressful and yet the most easily contented country. She is the most Catholic in creed, and by her folk-lore the most pagan country in Europe. Her people are the most feudal, and yet they produced O'Connell, the creator of all modern democracy. They are accused of failing economically under both free trade and protection. They are accused of building too many Catholic cathedrals, but in Dublin they have been indicted for *not* building one—(because they intended to take back the Protestant erection). In sum, witnesses against them disagree, but Ireland remains the home of the unexpected. She was the only country to increase her population as the result of being a belligerent in a European war. When gloom obscured the world, Ireland became "the one bright spot." Nevertheless, it took a war of nations to bring Irish factions together out of that atmosphere of suspicion and rancour in which Irish life is lived. Professor Jackson of Cambridge, after serving on the uni-

versity question, told us he had made four discoveries in Ireland:

1. That everything is a secret.
2. That Englishmen are honest fools.
3. That everybody is suspect.
4. That the best whisky is kept in Ireland.

Behind the factions and the politics of Ireland live a remnant of those who still speak the Irish tongue. On the Kerry borders, the Connemara bogs, and the Donegal Highlands lingers the oldest vernacular speech in Europe. Gaelic was spoken when Cæsar landed in Britain. Compared to Gaelic, English is a mongrel without a syntax. An Irish scholar laughs at the inflection of English verbs much as the English make fun of a Chinaman's pidgin-English.

The Irish speakers may be illiterate, but their wisdom is older than printing. Theirs is a week which dedicates no day to Thor. They know the stars by unclassical names. The pole-star (of the Northmen sailors) is "the star of knowledge" (of the Celtic Druids) to them. Orion's belt in Irish Ireland is "the King's wand." I once collected names by which the stars were known in Ireland before the Norman invasion, from an old woman living between Muckish and Errigal mountains.

She was afterward in trouble for selling illicit liquor, but she had the old knowledge. In Gaeldom the folk live in an atmosphere of fairy. Their affections are barely earthly, for they leave marriages to be fixed by the priest. The passionate go to America or take to drink, for their women have beauty and not fire. The *Ave Maria* has frozen their lips. But they have humour and bitterness, and religious ecstasies and fierce sports to fill the emotionalism which other peoples sacrifice at one fell swoop to lust. Because lust was not good enough, the Celt invented romance. The Church, like a wise old mother, has not interfered much with their custom and legend. In Gaeldom superstition is lost in imagination, and there is sometimes slight difference between charm and prayer, except that charms are always for temporal needs. In an Irish household there is a hereditary prayer for milking the kine, another for raking the ashes over the hearth fire, which is never allowed to go out. There are formal benedictions for taking snuff or for picking herbs. Until the day of the dispensary doctor the Irish had a fairy pharmacopœia. If they did use fox oil or a burnt swallow, the cures were not less numerous than under modern conditions. In the dark corners of cabins, in deserted lanes, and by Druid wells the

old ranns can still be heard. It is only the old people, who were born before the great famine swept Ireland to the bone, who have the old knowledge. An old man, the last story-teller of his townland, once showed me the blood charm, warning me never to put it to paper. He could stop a horse from bleeding as easy as blow the froth from it. I knew an eldest son of an eldest son, who was visited by people from Belfast to be charmed of their warts, and an old shepherd, nearly a hundred years old, who rubbed men and sheep for "the rose" (erysipelas).

In the Gaelic tradition every flower and beast was remembered for the part it played in the Passion. Peasants still spare the beetle that put the soldiers off the Lord's track, and remark that the midges bite sharp since they ate Judas! Still do they shudder at the curlew—the Juif errant of the moors—that once mocked Calvary. If the curlew's cry is that of a lost soul, the cheery chanticleer, who proclaims some such inanity as "cock-a-doodle-doo" to the Saxon world, calls with every dawn to the reverent Gael: "*Mac an oiyer slaun!*" (the Son of the Virgin is safe).

Love of animals in Ireland is not confined to the horse. The Irish saints admitted fox and badger as monks into their communities. I can

recall two modern bishops who took their reverent dogs into their cathedrals, of whom one was Archbishop Croke, the dread of English statesmen. When he lay dying during Holy Week of 1902, his pet dog entered and sat solemnly on his empty throne, between the vested canons, during the service of tenebræ. To those present it seemed a solemn sign of death. A thousand years previously St. Columba's death was foretold by his old white horse. Philosophies change, but things that are stranger than philosophies do not.

Very curious customs surround the dead in Ireland of which "the wake" and "the keen" have been plagiarised and debased by writers. They all spring from the Celtic belief (older than St. Patrick) that the dead do not die. Tobacco-pipes are often left on graves instead of wreaths, and at old-fashioned wakes offerings of snuff are piled on the navel of the corpse, from which each friend takes a pinch. Hence the familiar greeting of old folk exchanging snuff: "I never took a better pinch off the navel"—followed by the time-honoured response: "May the souls of all yours rest in peace by the grace of God."

There are a number of funeral games reserved for wake nights, such as "Boxing the Connaught-man" and "the Sitting Brogue." As the hours

of night pass, the living forget the dead and dance, for to the Celts life and death are as one. A priest told me once of an old beggar woman who died in a ditch in his parish. Of their charity the neighbours waked her for three merry nights—till the next townland felt lonesome, and begged the loan of the body for a dance themselves. It was "high" time before the priest had her buried. This spirit has reached the upper classes, for on one famous occasion, an Irish peer celebrated the opening of a family vault by a county ball! The people have the quaint and weird colouring in them that is too often bleached by civilisation. The invisible seems the more likely to their untutored minds, and the temporal is not to be depended upon. All current Irish philosophy is summed up in the saying: "It will all be the same in a hundred years"—which in its most important aspect is true.

Mystery and beauty still stalk the land. I knew a woman whose child was drowned in a well, and the child used to pull her skirt every time she went to draw water. She used to touch barrenness with a twig of enchanted blackthorn. She had other children who became prosperous in New York. Only two generations separates the cultured Irish-American millionaire from the poor but God-

loved race who habited Ireland "from the Flood to the famine."

As the old Irish tongue died out, there arose a literary compassion in England which took the form of a Celtic movement. A school of writers arose who made literary capital by belauding or belittling, libelling or labelling the Irish. Thanks to an audience of the middle class fleeing from English Teutonism and Philistinism, these writers won a cockney fame. Only Yeats deserved laurelled rank, though he is not so much an Irish poet as a Rossetti, lost in what old writers called "a Druidical mist." The only other figure in the movement was Synge, who, in his masterpiece, grafted a glorified dialect of Anglo-Irish to an absurd plot. His "Playboy" infuriated native audiences who had expected an Irish D'Artagnan or Quixote at least from him. The Playboy only tried "to kill his dad with a loy," but parricides are unknown in Ireland, though I remember one unfortunate enough to shoot his father accidentally. He was always afterwards called "Bagdad."

There are fine phrases in Synge. Who can forget—"a young gaffer would capsize the stars," or "coaching through Limbo!" But they were not Irish so much as pseudo-Shakesperean.

Ireland is a land where a few leading men in politics or literature are ever playing to the gallery of the gods. The people themselves seem only happy when heaven and earth are listening to their dissensions. There are fixed sides on political, religious, and literary questions, between which there is no place for canvass or conversion. Celtic grammar can be as fierce a question as Home Rule. If one side of the house were logs under, the other side would have lost its sounding-board.

I shall never forget, or regret, contesting Derry City as a Nationalist in 1910. Mr. Redmond launched me with a classical speech upon the maelstrom. Nobody cared a straw for free trade or taxes, for home or foreign policy. I lost a stand-up religious faction fight by small majorities. I retired later in favour of my chief Protestant supporter, David Hogg, and the seat was won for Home Rule. Hogg was perhaps the last of the extinct race of Radical Ulstermen who stood the siege of Derry and fought the battle of Bunker's Hill—in each case against an English king.

But so fierce was the feeling evolved by the Carson campaign, that Protestants would not receive the sacrament where Home Rulers

officiated. It is difficult for anyone who has not been behind the scenes of an Ulster election to realise the Mohammedan hatred of the cross among Orangemen, or the holy horror among Catholics for a "black Protestant." I believe my rival was brought to canvass the local "holy man." Somebody inquired the nature of his holiness. "Well, he just sits there all day and curses the Pope!"

No power less than German bayonets could bring these stubborn peoples together.

The division in Ireland is religious, not racial. There are as many Celts in the Orange ranks as there are of old Norman and Cromwellian blood among the Catholic Nationalists.

The secret of English misrule is that only Irishmen can understand the Irish. George Wyndham was the only fit ruler England ever sent to Ireland. Descended from the martyred Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Catholic-minded, a soldier and an editor of poetry, he seemed one born to solve the Irish question. Unfortunately for his generous and sanguine nature, he was assailed by the vulgar clamour of his own party and, when in difficulties, politely abandoned by Balfour. I met him on his civilising tour as Chief Secretary amongst Ulster landlords. I can recall the tones of dreamy per-

suasiveness with which he urged his scheme of devolution, or disguised home rule, to them, and they wondering to what devilment he was up. His grief, when betrayed by men, indeed, who thought he was betraying them, was terrible. His tears were not those of a baffled politician, but of a defeated idealist. When he fell from office he wrote a beautiful letter, unprinted as yet, in which he recognised that Ireland's Messiahs must be stoned like those of any other country. His was not the first, nor will it be the last heart to be broken for love of Ireland.

In Ireland as in chemistry the most innocuous subjects are liable to become explosives when mixed. Religion and politics are unfortunately the commonest example of such combinations. Sir Horace Plunkett repelled the Danish invader from the butter market, but unfortunately mixed bad theology with sound economics in his famous book. There was an explosion. Believing in conciliation amongst Irishmen, I once brought Sir Horace to the only spot he had never trod in Ireland—Maynooth. Dr. Hogan, his severest critic, ran out to welcome him, and the entente was established which springs up between all Irishmen of good-will. Another time I brought Provost Mahaffy of Trinity to see Cardinal Logue. I believe that

if one of them had not had to catch a train, they would have solved the Irish problem between them! The trouble in Ireland is that people are afraid of meeting for fear of becoming friends. Dr. Mahaffy was the omniscient friend of my youth. Though he could teach history, Greek, German and music at will, I knew him best as a snipe-shooter. With his old-fashioned gun and soft clerical hat and gaiters, he used to face the Monaghan bogs—looking not unlike Mr. Pickwick in his attire, but a Winkle I should add in sporting assiduity. The snipe, with its long bill, is the sacred bird of Irish sport—the ibis of the bogs. There are as different theories as to its shooting as there are of its cooking. Mahaffy held that you should fire whenever you sighted the white glint of its breast. I once saw him kill a snipe between eighty and ninety yards away—the most beautiful shot I ever saw fired. He was himself over three score at the time. He was wonderful company whilst bog-trotting. He used to launch theories on all subjects. He started the idea which is now generally held by Irish anglers, that coarse fish, such as pike, came into Ireland with the Saxons (whom it resembles for sluggish gluttony) and are still slowly dispossessing the lively brown trout who is a native Irishman of the

lakes. Certainly there is no old Gaelic word for pike as there is for trout and salmon.

Another theory he broached upon the bogs, was that the local McKennas were a remnant of the Firbolgs, the original neolithic race in Ireland, who had been driven by the conquering Gaels into the mountainous districts. A rounder type of skull and dark hair mark the elder race, which is sometimes described as Spanish. It was wrongly said that when Oscar Wilde wished to become a Catholic in his youth at Trinity, Mahaffy advised him to become a good pagan instead. Mahaffy's advice really was: "My dear Oscar, you are not quite clever enough to be one of us at Trinity, but they will be glad enough to have you at Oxford."

So Wilde went to Magdalen!

Mahaffy has made many famous replies, which may one day be chronicled. When a fanatic inquired if "he were saved," the doctor of divinity gravely answered, yes. "Why do you not proclaim it on the housetops?" went on the other. "Well, it was such a narrow squeak, I like to say nothing about it!" was the witty reply.

The last chapter of Irish history has been strange. I watched it from many sides. A Nationalist candidate myself, two of my relations

were returned as Unionists, a cousin entered the Home Rule Cabinet, and an uncle became an O'Brienite, or Independent member, in Cork. As an anti-climax his beautiful niece married the Ulster leader—Carson himself.

It always struck me that the Puck who put the "Ire" in Ireland, must have ranged Redmond and Carson on wrong sides. Redmond struck me as a conservative country squire, fonder of pressing the trigger of his sporting gun than of thumping tubs. A politician who has never taken a bribe, forgiving to his political enemies, a tolerant Catholic, and a mild rebel, he would have made a better member of Grattan's Parliament than a modern leader in perilous times.

Carson was a real boss. He concentrated his followers and exuded his own movement. His profession was the law, but his vocation was its defiance. He was probably the last of the Irish demagogues born to trouble English politics to frenzy. Only Redmond's influence with the Cabinet kept him out of jail, whither slow-witted Saxons were anxious to send him. His cries will linger on the breeze of history as long as historians suspect their unconscious part in firing the Great War.

Ireland has always been a stormy petrel. Her

rebellions have twice precluded the fall of English sovereigns. O'Connell's agitation gave a lead to the revolutions of 1848 over Europe. For five years before the Great War, Ireland threatened civil convulsion. She is the banshee of the world, and her crying aloud betokeneth death!

Curiously enough, the wife of an English admiral told me that while the English fleet were visiting Kiel before the outbreak of war, she wagered Tirpitz a sovereign that there would be civil war that year in Ireland—and Tirpitz only smiled! German agents were thick in Ireland that year.

Carson's men were in grimmer earnest than Redmond's who could see humour, which was a quality denied to the former during those fateful months. Ulster men are a hard-working, hard-saving race; preferring rather to indulge in prejudices than pleasures, superstitious even in their dread of superstition, but peaceable rather than military. A feeling of surprised dismay swept over them when the war proved to be not their war at all, and Ireland was proclaimed in spite of their gun-running, to be "the one bright spot of empire." Slowly and sadly they performed a full turn toward the sea and a new enemy under their

imperturbable leader. Only a few were unwilling to think of so good a Protestant as the Kaiser as an enemy, but the most of them remembered too late the forgotten text, that they who take the sword shall perish by the same.

CHAPTER VIII

AN EMPIRE OF SPORT AND FREEDOM

"WHAT do they know of England who only England know?" is a phrase of Kipling which would have puzzled all Victorian premiers except Disraeli. To Disraeli England and the East were equally congenial, and he eventually merged the English with the Indian crown. Kipling's burst into fame came with the rough times of the Boer War, when prophets were needed to say smooth things. In 1888 Moreton Frewen forwarded some of Kipling's work to England, and received word that it was "not up to the standard of the *Daily Telegraph!*"

Whoever knows England knows the empire. Officially it is not an accretion but an extension. English types and codes, English sports and chaplains have been reduplicated in block, wherever official tape has reddened the map.

The principles of English Whig society were

no abstract beliefs in fraternity, liberty, and equality. That the eldest brother should inherit is the English view of fraternity. That an Englishman's house is his castle represents his practice of liberty, and that all sportsmen are equal is his nearest approach toward equality. Imperialists, on the one hand, cannot forgive ministers who will not govern imperially, and "Little Englanders," on the other, excuse the empire in that it is not an empire. Nationalism flourishes rather than the reverse in British dominions. And most religions, except that of the State, are successful. A spirit of tolerance inclines officials to snub the official creed. It is the first empire to practise religious tolerance—even to apathy, as earnest believers have reason to deplore. Belgium used to send out more missionaries annually than England. On the Mediterranean English soldiers salute the Catholic Host at Malta, and the Holy Carpet in Egypt. The Koran is taught in the college commemorating Gordon—the principal Christian martyr of England.

Faith and morals in the East have been severely left alone since the Indian Mutiny. Even the horrors of Chinese life in the Transvaal mines were glossed over by Archbishop Davidson as "a regrettable necessity." Thomas à Becket's brimstone

is no longer stocked at Canterbury. The English official is the worst missionary possible. He believes his religious and social customs are the best, but he is indifferent whether inferior races envy or imitate. His offer to India is: "We will manage your government and finance without bribery or injustice. We will spear your pigs and shoot your tigers for reward. Worship your own gods, and we will sell you their images by the gross. If our bishops do bore you, they bore us much more. If you really wish to be Christians, select your own brand."

The English realise that it is a vain dream for those who believe in "original sin" to try to convert races who repeat from childhood the words: "Man is originally good." I once asked a Brahmin how English clergy affected him. He answered: "The Bishop of Madras used to have a wife; she ruled him and his chaplains. We laughed when he said he would show us the way to heaven. We do not think women can show the way to heaven."

The Indian Empire began with a dividend-bearing company and ended in the famous phrase, "The white man's burden," which represents a hazy notion of an Aryan mission to the East. The English have not understood Indian thought or

mysticism. Even Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* was a parody of Buddha. Kipling etched Indian philosophy in *Kim*, and Laurence Hope echoed their passion in *The Garden of Kama*. Incidentally Laurence Hope was the only white woman to commit suttee on her husband's grave.

India's real contribution to English life is polo, which has since proved a true tie between the sea-divided Saxons. It is curious that East and West can only meet in games—in Persian chess or Indian polo. Sport is the key to English rule and character. Fair play is the pith and fibre of the empire. It is sport which makes the English generally prefer referees to codes, adventure to efficiency, and the honour of contest to the lust for reward. English justice gives a sporting chance to every native in India. An English cavalry regiment was degraded by Curzon, to his great credit, for not confessing the murder of a black cook. A regiment of Uhlans, under such circumstances, might have been promoted.

The Government is not directly responsible for famines. For disaffection it is. Government stupidity sends Indians to English universities to forget their inferiority at the price of that in which they are superior. The symptoms of discontent

are sometimes inscrutable. Critics, for instance, point out that statues of Queen Victoria in India have to be guarded day and night by sentries, like those of Catherine the Great in Poland. Yet different reasons underlie the necessity. Catherine's policy of conquest was hateful to the Poles. It is the public view of the womanly form that shocks Orientals. King George's durbar lost some of the reverence, though none of the loyalty, that should surround one who occupies the throne of the great Mogul.

Under English rule no Indian has suffered for his religion. The mutiny, which was due to pig's fat on cartridges and pig-headedness in high places, was suppressed by Viceroy Canning, who was dubbed "Clemency" for his pains, or rather for the lack of pains he inflicted on the natives. In John Nicholson the mutiny produced the only European to ask or to receive religious worship in the East, since Vasco da Gama and St. Francis Xavier.

Indians may enter the Council of State but not the Bombay Yacht Club. English clubs and the Memorial to the Cawnpore Massacre are forbidden ground. European minorities in the East can afford to grant liberty but not equality. Kings can only rule where "they can do no wrong," and

whites must employ similar illusions in guiding black peoples. Modern unrest in India dates from the proposal of the Catholic Viceroy Ripon, himself the member of a recently penalised sect, to subject white offenders to black magistrates. A typical compromise was made, which insisted on an Englishman's right to a "piebald jury" composed half of whites. Under Curzon the unrest developed into a kind of babu-anarchism. Curzon represented Balliol on the throne, the philosopher-king who reformed India, until its calm was broken by bombs—a cold, scintillating ruler, not unworthy to succeed Warren Hastings, on whose virtue or iniquity historians cannot agree. He explained the use of commas to his officials, and introduced the Dalai Lama to armed civilisation. It was no anomaly on his part to give a gorgeous durbar in time of famine. Roman Emperors sated the crowds with "games and bread," *panem et circenses*. If bread was lacking in India, Curzon at least provided a circus.

English and Indian remain inscrutable to each other, especially the English. He has never wearied inveighing against native caste—yet at Curzon's durbar, Indian rajahs were much entertained by the refusal of visiting English duchesses to courtesy to the beautiful American vice-reine.

Pierre Loti wrote a poetical book in favour of an India without the English, as one might describe a mediæval palace without its modern conveniences. This sensible Indians realise; only idealists protest.

An appreciation of sportsmanship is the test for autonomy through the empire. Australia had to defeat England at cricket before she was given a commonwealth. The entente with France was immensely helped, in popular estimation, by a football victory over Scotland. Australia's success caused a sentimental mourning for "the Ashes of English cricket," and a form of crusade was despatched to bring them back from the Antipodes. Losing the Yacht Cup to America was felt almost as much as the original loss of the colony.

Sport remains the great unofficial department which permeates the empire, and costs the nation half as much again as the navy. Whoever can define "sport" can define the English. Sport is a practice originating probably in the ceaseless war Anglo-Saxons had to wage against forest animals. The northerners had to be mighty hunters in order to live. The English branch of the Teutonic family carried the sea-faring and animal-slaying propensities of the race to their highest pitch. Modern sport, thanks to a Celtic blend, keeps a

golden mean between the torture of animals and humanitarianism. Dick Martin, of Galway, established animal protection by law. That unwritten law of sport was gradually established, under which the pursued must be allowed a fair chance to escape. That big game have to be killed in the swamp instead of the arena, still differentiates the northern from the Latin idea of sport. The true sportsman prefers to miss a difficult quarry than to slay an easy one. This is a sentiment unknown to the Latin and mysterious to the Oriental. A Jewish squire was sadly perplexed when his guests put down their guns rather than fire among birds that flew too tamely. A sportsman is one who takes his chance when he *ought* and not when he *can*. He shall not aim at the sitting bird, nor strike the fallen boxer, nor quench the smoking flax. True sportsmanship sweetens the competition of life, is long-suffering in action, and is not puffed up in reminiscence.

Yet sport until Victorian days could be cruel for cruelty's sake. English bull-fighting, in which the animals horns were sawn, his tail and ears cropped and his nostrils plugged with pepper, was far more cruel than the Spanish ceremony. Bull-baiting was abolished in 1835 only. As late as the 'forties my grandfather saw a badger drawn

by a woman with her bare shoulders from a tub!

Sport has gradually attained its refinements and position in the Anglo-Saxon world. A man without the sporting sense, is as much out of place as an American without monetary instincts, or a Latin without gallantry. "These people must be lunatics or devils," observed the Tibetans when the first English expedition broke into a gymkhana. Even Belgian gendarmes gasped on seeing footballs bob behind the trenches in Flanders. Wellington took foxhounds to the Peninsular War. It is curious how the English mind reduces even militarism to terms of sport. In the Boer War ambulance wagons came to be called "game-carts." Replacing a general was "changing the bowling." Firing on the Red Cross was contemptuously summed up as "not playing cricket." Sport lends a greater prestige to men than politics. In winning the Derby during his premiership, Lord Rosebery experienced a moral grandeur that prevented his taking any serious part in politics again.

The sporting sense lies at the root of the national love of compromise. It has produced a class of referees. Even the Speaker of the House is a glorified umpire who interprets the rules of parliamentary fair play. It is this sense, more than

language, which divides German and English. German thoroughness can but detest compromises which arise from the spirit of freedom and fair play. Germany progresses by hard-and-fixed rules —but England by exceptions to rules. German children commit suicide to avoid examinations which in England are a national joke. The German working man is forced to live comfortably. In England he is free to be miserable.

Fair play introduced into war is a stumbling-block to German militarists, just as cheering an adversary is considered a confession of weakness. Yet Botha was cheered at Edward's coronation as Marshal Soult was at Victoria's. The English went out to war against Germany with a genuine wish to see fair play. It was a spirit which endured while the *Emden* was afloat, but sank irretrievably with the *Lusitania*.

The result of national characteristics has given England a sporting rather than a militarist caste. In Germany, an officer's uniform is his fortune. In England it required a small fortune before the war to wear one. Only in India or Egypt is there a tendency to militarism. Imperialism, which is the base of all militarism, past or present, is of a recent growth in England. Its rise may be popularly traced in those "deathless" ditties which

affect men's minds more than laws. The English crowd hummed:

"We don't want to fight,
But, by Jingo, if we do!"

and the rank and file of imperialism took their name from the verse. The jubilee period produced an infectious chorus not unlike a hysterical peacock's *Te Deum*, "Tarara-boom-de-ay!"

The dubious days of the Boer War, in which the empire temporarily struck bottom led to the haunting refrain:

"What Ho, she bumps!"

It was a pity when the day of battle came, that the music-hall should have taken the place of a national Tyrtæus. Perhaps nothing could better show the careless phlegm of the English soldier than the laughing snatches and phrases with which he has charged. When the French chant their Marseillaise, Mr. Atkins has been heard to observe as he goes into action perhaps for all eternity: "Front seats sixpence!"

As long as Gladstone obsessed public life by his personality, imperialism was not encouraged as a creed. Chamberlain was the first to conceive the notion of putting the empire into a fiscal strait-waistcoat. He marked the advent of the

business man into politics. He did not hesitate to conquer the Boers with shells made in Germany and cavalry from the Antipodes. The Boer War should have acted as a signal and a warning. General after general buried his reputation behind the kopjes. The despatches made woful reading. Roberts once reported that all would have been well with one regiment if there had been no panic! Buller confided that he had made the enemy respect his rear! It was no consolation to hear that the Boer numbers had been killed several times over. The public craving for comfort centred on Baden-Powell's defence of Mafeking. It was afterward confessed that the defender had exhibited "unconventional gaiety" rather than any great military quality, and even committed lèse-majesté by issuing his own head on postage-stamps. In the modern sense there was not a siege at all. Nevertheless, Mafeking was the high-water mark of imperialism. Its relief threw London into hysteria and added "maffick" to the "Standard Dictionary." At Eton I remember a vivid incident typical of the microcosm of empire. Among the display of bunting, a Boer flag was hung from the window by a boy suspected of being a pro-Boer. The boys gathered and stormed the house, the inhabitants of which showered their

books and stores into the street. The air was rent with groceries and bathtubs. It was a mad half-hour, and the house was more damaged than most of the buildings in Mafeking. In the evening the whole school marched up to Windsor with torches, to serenade the old Queen. Leaving the Windsor mob to bellow outside the gates, we entered and sang under the royal windows. The curtains were drawn aside by the Hindu attendants, and we beheld the Queen with the cadaverous Bishop of London (Creighton) standing in the background. The hand of death was over both of them, and, indeed, they died within a few days of each other in the following January. For a few moments the sad, stolid face of Victoria looked out upon the children and the grandchildren of the Victorians. It was pathetic that she, for whom Gordon had died and the Light Brigade charged, should make her farewell bow from the box to us on an evening of opera bouffe!

The Boer War outlasted Queen Victoria, with its endless failures and delays. Warning, unfortunately, it brought and more. It even generated a fatal idea among Englishmen. It is said that the devil, failing in all else to tempt the Irish, successfully whispered to them, "Do not hurry"—and they believed him. Some genius for evil per-

suaded the English that they could always "muddle through." The result was that all ideas of efficiency and preparedness resulting from the South African travail were still-born. Disasters were forgotten, not digested. The official history of the Boer War was completed by Colonel Henderson, I believe on his death-bed. It is a document essential to the history of the empire, but for one reason and another its publication was long delayed.

The Boer War itself was forgotten in the elections of 1906. The Liberals returned to power on the tide of reaction, bringing with them all the half-hatched feuds and schemes which made the country a political cockpit until the outbreak of the Great War eight years later.

The English were more encouraged than dismayed by their adventures on that continent which had swallowed empires and churches. The travels of Livingstone, his discovery by Stanley with the immortal "Dr. Livingstone, I presume?" celebrating their meeting, the finding of Victoria Nyanza and Rhodesia, the Cape to Cairo Railway, the purchase of the Suez Canal, and the damming of the Nile, led the English to believe in their vocation as a charmed, if not a chosen, people in

Africa. They absorbed the Boers, they shooed the French from Fashoda, they blocked the way to Germans in Morocco.

The Egyptian chapter was amazing. The early Victorians used to be interested in the sphinx because of its resemblance to Tom Cribb's countenance after a prize-fight. The next generation conceived a mission to the Egyptians. They entered into dual control with the French, to rule that part of the Sultan's dominions for the good of its inhabitants. The bombarding of Alexandria and single control followed. The patriot Arabi was defeated, and only escaped death owing to four thousand pounds of legal assistance from Wilfrid Blunt. Arabi was spared, but Gordon was sacrificed. Whether Gladstone's soul must sit and twitter for ever on the telegraph-wires to Khartoum or not, Gordon's marches in the great army of idealists whom the world has not known how to use. Only England could have given Egypt a Gordon and a Cromer. Since Joseph, no foreigner has done more for Egypt materially than Lord Cromer. As an instance of the eternal gulf between idealists and practical men, Cromer's record of Gordon is curious. He recognised his "lively though sometimes ill-directed repugnance

to injustice, oppression, and meanness of every description; and considerable power of acquiring influence on those, necessarily limited in numbers, with whom he was brought into personal contact." But—"as a matter of personal morality" he did not think "his process of reasoning defensible." Words that might have appeared in Pilate's Judean memoirs of *Another Great Idealist.* Pilate was the prototype of all English officials—with his condescending yet contemptuous manner to natives, his tolerant scorn of their beliefs, and his occasional feeble generosity toward patriots or prophets. Yet Pilate had good points, and was canonised by the Abyssinian Church. No more than any English official could he have understood why Gordon should prefer a lonely death to "hailing the tram of the world," in Gordon's own phrase, or why an Egyptian Moslem should prefer death for his prophet to prosperity under Christian rule.

To compare Egypt in the 'eighties with Palestine under the Romans would afford a parallel. The British and Roman Empires have been more alike than any other. If the old khedive out-Heroded Herod, and Cromer displayed the governing qualities of a Pilate, the Mahdi and Gordon between

them supplied some historical inkling to the character and political effect of Christ—plunged as he found himself in another perilous meeting-ground between East and West.

If the British Empire has shown religious tolerance, she has lacked the higher gift of imagination. Her motto, "*Imperium et Libertas*," is really a contradiction in terms. A sporting pity for inferiors like the fellaheen, together with a decided respect for equals like the Boers within her bounds, has made modern imperialism the glittering excuse for a wider liberty than is consistent with the armed rule of conquered races.

Not that there is not a native and nationalist view. It is from England herself that the strongest criticisms of the invasions of Egypt, Afghanistan, the Boer Republics and Thibet have come. Defenceless invasions of the defenceless they appeared to many honest Englishmen.

Whoever writes the lining of English history must consult the little-known monographs of Wilfrid Blunt attacking English rule in Ireland, Egypt, and India. His partisanship may be as sharp as salt, but his view makes a necessary condiment to an impartial history.

Yet Wilfrid Blunt is one of the most English of Englishmen I know, with his stubborn individualism and his chivalrous sense of fair play. A poet himself and a breeder of Arab horses, a Catholic with Mohammedan sympathies, a Sussex landlord and an Oriental politician—he is not far removed from the Byronic tradition which has made English gentlemen the symbol of madness and generosity abroad.

Wilfrid Blunt did not hesitate to adopt the cause of Ireland, and was thrown into Galway Gaol by Mr. Balfour, then Irish Secretary. It is difficult, for some unexplained but historical reason, to be serious in Ireland without becoming ridiculous. Blunts' photograph in convict kit was popular among his friends. King Edward seeing one of these, was puzzled by the uniform. "It is your Majesty's," he was informed.

Perhaps Wilfrid Blunt is a better symbol of English character than the procurators and viceroys whom his books assail. In spite of herself has England become imperialistic. Her better self has condemned and striven to rectify her treatment of the Irish and the Boers. It is possible that such races of mankind as have settled down under British rule during the nineteenth century

have enjoyed the same admixture of peace and toleration with which the Flavian and Antonine emperors made happy the world—at least as happy as historical conditions ever seem likely to permit.

CHAPTER IX

SOCIETY IN DECAY

WITHIN memory of many people living, English society was a feudal club without right of entry from outside. The Whigs of pedigree stood at the head of a great patrician stud. Though eugenics as a science were unknown, the social value of good breeding was even overappreciated. Blood, whatever its merits, led to position and success. The advantages and the defects of aristocratic inbreeding are always noticeable. Peerage, baronetage, and gentry formed limited circles. Betwixt the squirarchy and the plebs there was a gulf fixed. The remnants of the old Catholic peerage were the most exclusive of all. Their blood was changed during Victoria's reign by the Oxford converts, in the same way that the American brides later freshened the veins of the peerage as a whole.

For good or for bad the old society decayed, and

was succeeded by another whose decay may also be questioned. A caste of some five hundred privileged trustees has extended into a mob of ten thousand, few of whom are native gentry, and the most prominent seldom Europeans. On the one hand, American women charmed their way into the charmed circle, while, on the other, Jews and mercantile princes entered by all manner of financial hooks and crooks. The Jew has a better position in England than in America, where he is socially boycotted by a society which is as rich or richer. From being so unknown in society that Disraeli was only admitted as a drawing-room freak, the Jew has come to permeate London society. He entered under the gonfalon of the Rothschilds. Bringing the first news of Waterloo has made the Rothschilds great among a nation of stock-brokers. During the nineteenth century the Jews have taken a part in every department. No profession and no party can claim them. Their Joshuas and Calebs have carried away no ignoble fruits from the promised land. Within half a century a Disraeli became Premier, a Herschell Lord Chancellor, a Jessel Master of the Rolls, a Montefiore Lord Mayor, and an Isaacs Lord Chief Justice. The names of Jacob and Jacobson were found even

among the State bishops. The English archbishoprics remained, however, a Scotch monopoly. Both Lang of York and Davidson of Canterbury are of Presbyterian origin.

Individual Jews have by their services been of national benefit. But the society-seeking swarm has had doubtful value. Their indiscriminate entry has changed such standards as made social privileges worth while.

Anti-Semitic feeling is as degrading and out of date as the pillory, but social discrimination can be an ethical necessity. It is difficult to press the social charge home—for, on the one hand, the Jews show a higher religious and moral life than English society. But nationally they are out of place, as is shown by their total lack of the sporting sense, except in the occasional guise of magnificent patrons. The silly Gentile has not understood so well in England as in America that the chosen people are wiser than the children of the world, and that the meek do inherit the earth. Nevertheless, Jewish versatility demands admiration in modern England. They win victories on the Turf and conduct debate in the House of Commons as successfully as they run newspapers and banks. Parliament is their wash pot, and over the empire they have cast their shoe.

The only professions in which they have not

risen are those of arms and diplomacy. They have not made the army their profession, not owing to lack of courage so much as to the smallness of the remuneration, which fact might well challenge the divine injunction to soldiers to be satisfied with their pay. Sir William Butler used to say that Gordon was the only soldier he knew who ever was satisfied with it.

From English diplomacy Jews are excluded because cleverness is not its first qualification. Nor have Jews taken to the Navy. The Phœnicians performed sea-service for them in old days, and the ships of England secure the carriage of their commerce to-day.

The decay or soundness of society influences every profession except the Navy. There may be "political" generals, but the admiral in politics is rare. It required so bluff and breezy a type as Lord Beresford to carry off the rôle. Nevertheless, his parliamentary career has been an interesting experiment. Isaac Butt, Parnell's predecessor, once suggested that Beresford should lead the Irish party. He has, however, represented the Navy in the House. His criticism has been sound when naval and not political, but as an Irish admiral in English politics he has found himself between somewhat unmusical chairs.

The distinction of the English Navy as well as

its safeguard is in being outside society. The Navy is always absent on its mission upon the sea. Naval officers are devoted to their service like Levites from their youth up. Yeoman and seafaring blood predominates among them. No alien may serve in the ships. The standing Army includes men of sport and society, as well as the professional strategist. But the naval officer finds his profession paramount and absorbing. It is for him to leave parents and family and to serve unremittingly upon the altars of the deep. Hard toil and scant pay through long years are his, that others may be safe in gathering the riches of the world.

The Navy is the force which never ceases to be in action. Their warfare against other navies has proven a direct continuation of their previous life. To mobilise they do not have to leave their homes. The sailors have always been in the trenches, and their trenches are the seven seas. Their traditions have been untouched by that lowering of ideals which has invaded every other class and profession. The saviour of society owes its strength to the fact that it remains apart and uncontaminated by society itself.

Parenthetically, it may be noticed that the Navy,

as a service, retains much of the old religious sense. Admiral Beresford notes truly that the men swear but do not blaspheme. In Germany the Navy is the secondary service, and the calibre of the middle-class atheists who pace her decks cannot compare with the Christian gentlemen under the white ensign. The English fleet has been aptly compared to the Roman legions cut off from a decadent capital, who guarded the world from the barbarians until the wall was broken through. Whether English society was suffering from decay or development, symptoms made their appearance not far different from those which historians tell of the last phase of Roman history. The Colosseum once contained the same crowds of pallid unfit that watched the muddy arenas of English football. A similar indolent and half-educated bourgeoisie loafed in the imperial baths as attended English cricket. In the higher stage of society there was the same revulsion from the old-fashioned virtues, and an expressed contempt for whatever belonged to the Augustan, or in the latter case Victorian, age in writing or morals. London churches were deserted for week-end parties, exactly as the temples were scorned by the jaded pleasure-seekers of Rome. Nobody in England took the sovereign's

defensorship of the faith more seriously than the Romans took the deification of their emperors.

The State religion in London had a less hold on many than the charlatan, the theosophist, and the necromancer, just as Capitoline Jove and matronly Juno were deserted for the more exciting deities of the East. Society women in London exchanged family lockets for immodest charms. Porte-bonheurs and talismans of jade found more sale than crosses or "Mizpah" brooches. Even "St. Christophers" were carried on motors for reasons of superstition,—not of devotion. Neurotic criminology attracted more interest than unselfish charity. The signs were present, even if the decay was not as deep as German sociologists wished to believe. War instantly restored the old stoical and patriotic virtues.

It is very difficult to gauge any society at any given time. But its soundness or decay may be tested by its view of morality, its practice of humour, and its attitude toward woman (who incidentally is the mixture of morality and humour). The Anglo-Saxon treatment of women is considered highly chivalrous by Anglo-Saxons, but supremely ridiculous by Latins. In Latin countries women have little legal right, but they enjoy

(from their point of view) the best husbands—husbands at least who are less family men than romantic lovers. The position of women in England is based partly on legal rights and partly on the unwritten law. The dual position has produced confusion, irritation, and suffragism.

In America (the country where the Anglo-Saxon loses his sense of compromise) the woman is a man's legal, in some places his electoral, equal. As a result Americans may be more moral husbands than Latins, but they are disappointing to the wives whom they treat as beautiful housekeepers, to await their evening return from business in diamond tiaras instead of lace caps. This is, perhaps, the psychological reason why American women marry foreigners, though the native man is of a cleaner and more generous type. A Latin considers that to leave a wife alone all day is equivalent to desertion. There is a difference again between the Latin cavalier and the Anglo-Saxon gentleman. The latter treats all women as virtuous until they plainly declare the contrary. The former looks upon every woman as a possible source of romance until she closes his hopes. The sexual politeness of Latins is most apparent in

the drawing-room. A sinking liner is the proper background for the more stolid chivalry of the Anglo-Saxon. Latins often taunt Englishmen that they show the same pride and fondness toward their wives as they do for their horses. "Fine" is a word they apply exactly to both.

In its clumsy and illogical way English morality has held together. It is often loose but seldom decadent. The British matron is righteous, and the general run of Englishmen are bored if not contemptuous at the vices of romance. An easy-going virtue cements more English marriages than the subtler emotions could. Even American wives brought less romance than emancipation into England. They taught Englishwomen to smoke, to ride bicycles, and to travel unaccompanied. They cleared away the cobwebs, but they spun the threads of no immortal love-stories. Anglo-Saxons do not know the meaning of romance, because their wives have never taught it them.

American women have played a brilliant and eugenic part in modern society. They have restored many of the old English virtues which seemed at one time likely to survive only with the middle class. They have made some counterpart

against the more foreign admixture which has entered London. They added tact to the stock of Englishwomen. The quickest instance of tact I ever saw in an American hostess was in a church. She was entertaining a member of the Royal Family in a back-country district. The plate was handed round at collection, and royalty carelessly dropped silver. Quick as lightning the hostess covered it with gold, and royal munificence has been a by-word in those parts ever since!

English morality is inscrutable and illogical. Magna Charta apparently allows a man to parade the worst woman in London at a watering-place, but the local by-laws frequently forbid a boy bathing with his mother. Society is weird in its acceptances and exclusions. The most bankrupt and disreputable peer passes as a decayed gentleman, but a nobleman who has cheated at cards enters the class that Orientals call "the untouchables." The most famous of society card cheaters was none the less tabooed, though it appeared he had cheated in order to support an aged mother! The unpleasant obverse of all British morality is the national hypocrisy, the "ostrich" policy of burying the head rather than face moral problems. The ostrich feathers in the Prince of Wales's crest

are a national symbol. The English nation will not allow a spade to be called a spade, or else they will insist on a charitable supposition that it is a shovel. In England a man may live with whom he will, provided only England never knows.

Sir George Lewis had, perhaps, the best knowledge of English society that was possible even to so conscientious and experienced a lawyer. It is difficult not to believe that necessity will arise for his professional services on the day of judgment. One of his acts was of rare generosity. He was opposed to Dilke on the occasion of his divorce trial, but offered him as good advice as he later offered Parnell. Perceiving there was no question they could really ask him, he advised him privately to enter the witness-box rather than allow a great career to be ruined. Unfortunately Dilke took other advice.

The two most promising careers in English and Irish politics were sacrificed at their zenith, owing to the peculiar moral sense of English dissenters, and with political results extending far further than the two principals.

It is curious, though idle, to try to inquire what the effect of these *causes célèbres* had upon history. If Parnell had remained chairman of the Irish party, Home Rule would have probably been

passed in 1894, and England would not have been threatened by an Irish civil war twenty years later when she needed all her wits to face the menace of Germany.

If Dilke had succeeded Gladstone as his party had hoped, and occupied Asquith's shoes until his death in 1909, it is possible that Germany might have had reasons to reconsider her decision in 1914. Though Dilke was a red Radical and a personal friend of Gambetta, he wrote text-books on *The British Army* and *Greater Britain*, both of them subjects distasteful to the Liberal mind. He might have made England readier for war. Gambetta had no doubt influenced him with the experiences of France.

Forms of humour are a subtle medium for testing a human society. To tell a nation's jokes is to tell its moral code. Humour is the element which is most quickly irradiated or corroded by the surrounding age. The humour of the later Roman Empire or the second French Empire, was a signpost of decadence. English humour still spells rowdiness rather than riot and raillery. The practical joke was always a Teutonic institution. The Latin jests with his curling lips, the Anglo-Saxon by clumsy horse-play.

It is true that the finer wit of the eighteenth

century has disappeared from London with the old-fashioned wives. Gossip and sparkling cheapness have taken its place. Mrs. Robert Crawshay remains the only wit whose *bons mots* would have been considered classical in the days of Curran and Sheridan. Her famous description of the last and talkative Lord Erne and his well-chiselled lady was one line from Gray's Elegy:

"Storied Urn and animated bust."

When Chamberlain introduced tariff reform, she asked Mr. Balfour if "England expects every man to pay her duty?"

The last parliamentary *mot* in the old style was made by Lord Hugh Cecil. He was told to expect a challenge to duel after his attack on Brodrick's management of the War Office.

"I should win," he answered with equanimity. "Brodrick is sure to use an obsolete weapon!"

Unfortunately the lowest and most ungenerous forms of abuse now prevail in a house where 'tis folly to be either witty or wise. The expressions and monosyllables which the national representatives bandy, may be collated to any extent among the wits of Whitechapel and Limehouse.

As a matter of fact, there never was any native English wit. It was entirely imported by Irish-

men. The practical joke was the English form of humour—concrete and clumsy, if not coarse. English memoirs record many of these heavy pleasantries in the place where French writers embalm examples of the national gift for the glittering phrase.

Theodore Hook (Disraeli's Stanislaus Hoax) was the epitome of English humour. His ventures in *bon mot* were childishly ridiculous, but his Berners Street hoax held up the traffic of London.

It is difficult not to mention a remarkable practical joker who added so much to the humour of the forgotten days of King Edward VII and who was a contemporary of mine at Cambridge. I was fortunate enough to witness the famous visit he paid in 1905 to the university, of which he was a student, disguised as the Sultan of Zanzibar. Accompanied by a suite selected among his friends, he was driven in the mayor's carriage to view the familiar sights.

His next feat was to emulate Koepenick, and inspect a British battleship disguised as a foreign prince, and to distribute decorations to the simple-minded sailors—(who, however, caught and caned him long afterward). He was last heard of as the guest of an Irish viceroy in Dublin, where I believe he tested the local detective force by simulating

an attack on the viceroy, and waiting, watch in hand, for the members of the Secret Service to arrive, too late to be of any assistance!

On the whole, English humour and English morality have broadened but not decayed. Rottenness and deterioration have fastened upon sections of English society, but wholesale decadence is not there. The war has purged away much dross and allowed some of the original metal to come to the surface. But new metals and new moulds will be needed in the period after the war.

CHAPTER X

POST-VICTORIANISM

EDWARD VII led his subjects in their natural desire to set aside things Victorian. For years he had chafed under the strict surveillance imposed by the Prince Consort. A reaction was the result, and as Prince of Wales he found his friends elsewhere than at court, and his interests in other capitals than his mother's. The humiliating and dependent position in which the Queen retained him made him the first Englishman to break with Victorianism. He shocked Victoria's subjects, as he afterward delighted his own. In his reign everybody was anxious to be different from his Victorian grandparents. The Victorian attitude had upheld all conventions, literary, political, or religious. Enthusiasm for the new, or scepticism of the old, had been regarded as too French or too American. The Oxford Movement which

might have developed a national religion, was embittered to take refuge in the arms of Rome. The æsthetic movement which might have led to a national art, was ridiculed into preciosity and early decadence. The Victorians laughed at their prophets.

But in the reigns of Edward and George new movements were taken up with such speed and enthusiasm that they were liable to dissipate of themselves into thin absurdity. Everybody set out to break rules and supplant conventions. The latest "craze" or "rage" superseded the old staple diet. There was an unholy cry for strange meats. The atmosphere was agitated by crank artists and preposterous poseurs, and became hectic and unbalanced. Patriotism came to be regarded as old-fashioned and morality as stupid. To be serious was a social defect. Even society's sinners were not serious enough to be really bad. People were willing to forgo their sinning, provided they were not mistaken for good. Young men who, in a sterner age, would have enjoyed being taken for Arctic explorers, preferred being suspected of decadence. Quite bourgeois people, without the ability or occasions to be fast, simulated moral speed. Doubtless there were psychological thrills,

and the old Victorian blood cried to heaven and hell for thrills. Society indulged in what theologians call the sins of association.

In literature Browning and Tennyson were dismissed as grandmotherly. The latter was sent to Coventry and the former to Boston. Swinburne was hailed as the only poet of his era,—about twenty years after he had ceased to write good poetry. It was discovered that the "yellow" 'nineties had been the only artistic decade of the previous century. A feverish rechauffé of Wilde, Beardsley, and Pater followed. A post-Victorian literature was not long in starting on its own account, with flashiness for its hall-mark and paradox as the test of its sterling. Literary values became entirely superficial. The glitter without the weight of gold was accepted and honoured. English literature passed from an Augustan age straight to that of brass. There was no intermediary age of silver.

Commencement-de-siècle writers arose as brilliant and soundful as brass, who insisted on writing against time, though they had a fresh century ahead of them. They seemed to share a consciousness with Edward Rex that their day was short —as though some early cataclysm threatened to

make an end of them and of all their works. As a result, there was little scientific or philosophic writing. The three-volumed novel was succeeded by the sixpenny one. Writers learned to heighten and intensify the produce of the moment. The ablest and most distinct of Edwardian writers was Chesterton. He wrote like some Dr. Johnson condemned to set forth the coils of his expression by cable code. As a result, he substituted the paradox for the period. In a literary *tour de force* he defended orthodoxy by writing a book about *Heretics*, and he exactly hit his age in laying down "the golden rule that there is no golden rule." Very exactly also he probed the thought of all contemporary writing in the choice saying: "Everything matters except everything." He perfected the game of literary "reversi" in which pieces that were red one moment are seen to be green the next—an irritating but scintillant style. Smilingly he stood truth upon her head to explain the Universal Antipodes in which we all have our being.

Chesterton had serious motives behind his paradoxes, but others were sensational for sensation's sake. Bernard Shaw may have had an artistic and a dramatic message to deliver, but he could not

forgo the cheapest advertisement of the prophet. It was not until after the death of Victoria that Shaw could be appreciated or tolerated. Though in France he would only have been considered an outmoded Voltairean, he passed in England for the apogee of human daring and originality. His vogue endured until the futurists swept into undisputed mastery of the powers of topsyturvydom. Nevertheless, both Shaw and Chesterton had sane lessons to teach the Victorian. The futurist only wished to destroy him, and as a preliminary to drive him mad.

The influences which corroded literature, worked with tenfold corruption through the Press. The *Daily Mail*, ochre offspring of the yellow 'nineties, reached its zenith in Edwardian days, when its proprietor became proprietor of the *Times*. Harmsworth showed himself a transatlantic Hearst, but he secured prestige and immunity by supporting the side of reaction in politics. Hailed as a paper Napoleon, he chose the title of Northcliffe, enabling him to copy the Napoleonic initial in his signature. Under his ægis rose a school of journalists, each of whom carried an editor's pen in his knapsack. Journalism and literature became indistinguishable, and to each the

epithet of "yellow" could be forcibly and fitly applied.

The infection of sensationalism spread to the pulpit. The Bishop of London used flashy novels, like *When It Was Dark*, as the subject of sermons in St. Paul's Cathedral. Dissenting preachers developed a church slang and even called on their hearers to stand by the old firm, "*God and Son!*" Only the shopkeeping soul could ever have conceived the Trinity under such a figure. The Catholic pulpit was liable to the same necessity. Only by sensation apparently could credence be attracted. Father Vaughan, decrying the sins of society to audiences which were neither sinners nor society, was in symbolic relations with his times.

The novelists followed on the same track. A bright mildew pervaded their pages. Their Victorian fathers had eaten sour grapes in the garden of Mrs. Grundy, and the children's teeth were set on edge. There was a cry for something wilder than Scott, for something more gloomy than the Brontës, for something more sexual than George Eliot. Dickens and Miss Austen were as forgotten as the Pentateuch. Even novelists who had begun writing in the Victorian age developed new and

unexpected methods. Wells became the chemical and mechanised romanticist of his time. An interest in science served him and his readers in place of love of chivalry. There arose a cry for the future instead of the past.

George Moore was a French writer of the naturalist school writing in English. His novels were as great a *tour de force* as though a Greek erotic writer endeavoured to express himself in clumsy Latin. Of their school, *Evelyn Innes* and *Sister Teresa* are not likely to be replaced in English. It was typical of the Victorian and post-Victorian ages, that up to 1900 everybody pretended he had not read George Moore, while under King Edward all pretended they had! After interesting himself in the Gaelic movement, Moore produced a trilogy of novels which had the ironic result of immortalising the revivalists of Irish letters in the English literature they once had hopes of supplanting. He sketched the portraits of his familiar friends with an unabashed pen. "A. E.", Douglas Hyde, Lady Gregory, Edward Martyn, Yeats, live with all their idiosyncrasies in his pages. Since Boswell jotted Dr. Johnson there has been no such photography.

Even the Catholic novelist Hugh Benson could

not help exhibiting the contemporary symptoms. He wrote fascinating novels in the nature of propaganda. He burned flash-lights before the altars of Rome. He once confided to me that his novel *The Conventionalists* was written to madden the critics. He had just converted a clever contemporary of mine at Cambridge by a process of exciting mysticism. The process he elaborated in his next novel, *The Conventionalists*. Not content with sketching his penitent, he leaped into his own pages under his own name and triumphantly converted his hero over again! He mingled mysticism and wove the tags of theology into his novels, exactly as Wells transferred the sweepings of science to his.

The post-Victorian concert was a mad one while it lasted. In the midst Bernard Shaw sang solos in minor blasphemy, while Chesterton wrung fantastic fugues from a Gothic organ. The notes sounded by others were too superficial to need criticism, but as distinct post-Victorians (whatever their preliminary work) may be reckoned Hugh Benson, Wells, G. Moore, Belloc, and Masefield. If readers remained sane, it was because they no more took literature seriously than the writers thereof. Eventually, perhaps, they came to share

Chesterton's "insane dread of insanity." They needed rest more than change, and it must be confessed that it was out of sheer vertigo that Kipling, Chesterton, and Belloc began to hymn such English simplicities as *Sussex*, *Chalk*, and *Beer*.

Outside the circle of a literature, which, however disfigured by cleverness, was seldom offensive, a thoroughly unpleasant output of memoirs marked the taste of the age. Egregious personalities masqueraded as reminiscences. Heading the charge of "light" literature, Lady Cardigan achieved the Balaclava of scurrility. The sale for such works multiplied. During the last few weeks before the war, the public were admitted to Lord Alfred Douglas's confidences on Oscar Wilde and to Mrs. Parnell's intimacies with the dead Irish leader. Even a most unpleasant work by an ex-priest on the *Amazing Emperor Heliogobalus* received the imprimatur of a preface from the Cambridge Regius Professor of History. It was time, perhaps, that Thor came knocking upon the gates.

The same portents were visible in politics as in literature. Chivalry, restraint, and decorum, whatever their demerits, took a back place. The House

of Commons took its tone from the new Labour party. Acrimonious and senseless revilings took the place of argument on both sides. The younger men who had attained prominence were advanced for their glib smartness. Mr. F. E. Smith rose to the forefront of the Tory party after a single speech of overcharged epigram. It was remarked that in earlier days he would only have qualified to be Disraeli's secretary. Another career which would have been impossible in Victorian days was that of Horatio Bottomley. He may be summarised as a modern Socrates, "the gadfly of the State," but a Socrates who has taken to journalism. His criticisms were not scurrilous or delivered below the belt, but his sheet *John Bull* became endeared to the public for sensation's sake. There is a sensationalism of morality as well as of vice.

The last few months of politics and political gossip before the war broke out were sad and ignominious to recall. Stagnation, suspicion, and slander combined to poison the atmosphere. Never were dissensions in English life so acrimonious, or tongues so malicious. Mr. Asquith's salary would not have paid the duty on all the wine Tory hostesses insisted he was drinking. The extremes

of bitterness and fabrication were reached in reference to naval questions. Lords of the Admiralty were arraigned as wife-beaters or Cingalees! The latter incredible assertion was hurled by opponents at Lord Fisher, who certainly began life as he is ending it—a very stolid and pugnacious Englishman.

Of the protagonists in the naval debates, Admiral Beresford was my father's cousin, whilst Winston Churchill was my own, and I must admit that the blows and counterblows which they exchanged were manly and above the belt. Amid a crowd of sneaking partisans, they fought disinterestedly for what each believed to be the best for the Navy. When the war broke out I was gratified to hear Beresford say that England could never be sufficiently grateful for what Winston had done in mobilising the fleet. Winston admitted, in a characteristic burst of generosity, that the Admiralty had profited from Beresford's previous criticism.

With the single exception of the Admiralty, the English social machine, politically, educationally and even morally, was unprepared and reluctant for war. The empire as a whole had sat down to

rest upon her laurels. Her expansion was at an end. She tipped from Lhasa to Alaska—from Cairo to Cape—from Victoria Nyanza to King Edward VII's land. "Thinking imperially" had petered out from exhaustion. Energy and discussion were concentrated on domestic affairs, Home Rule, Disestablishment, the House of Lords. The maelstrom of politics became more and more agitated. England staggered in the transition stage between the old-fashioned and limited rule of her political aristocrats, to the unlimited supremacy of social democrats. The Cabinet showed transitional symptoms. It contained a farrago of Whigs, Liberals and Socialists, endeavouring to be progressive in harmony. Within five years Lloyd George changed English life—whether for good or for bad historians will have to probe far-reaching results to decide. As far as national balance and efficiency were concerned, Lloyd George came either too soon or too late. The war found the scales between the classes and masses not only unadjusted but in constant agitation. The atmosphere was rent with their violent dissensions and the streets were filled with trampled suffragettes. Ireland was tossed in the brew of

civil war and Wales was a sectarian cockpit. In England the menace of trade-unions overshadowed even the question of Lords and education—both subjects of unrelenting hostilities.

The Government maintained its hold on power by filling up the gaping chinks between the social strata with German patchwork. In quick succession they borrowed the system of labour exchange and old-age pension from beyond the Rhine. Haldane even introduced some elements of Prussian organisation into the bewildered and protesting War Office.

It was curious, to the impartial observer, to note how much was being borrowed from Germany at this time. Doctors poured their drugs, scholars their texts, Labourites their doctrines, the Cabinet their schemes, churchmen their higher criticism, and, most unexpected of all, Gaelic revivalists borrowed their Celtic grammars from the same source of since-repudiated culture.

As the fatal hour of destiny drew near, shriller grew the cries and more blinded the infatuation of the politicians. The diplomatists prophesied smooth things, with such exceptions as Sir Louis Mallet, and even had they foretold dangers, nobody

at home was in a mood to listen. Even the State Church reverberated to the Gilbertian atmosphere. The world crisis found Anglicanism cloven between the rival claims of the Bishops of Uganda and Zanzibar, who had collided in the African mission field on the question as to whether their amazed converts were Catholics or Protestants. The Kikuyu question, as it was called, was referred to the worthy Archbishop of Canterbury, who decided, *ex cathedra*, that they could be both or either, provided they did no violence to Church principles! Whereat one archangel retired behind a cloud, and two cherubs at least were admonished for laughing.

July, 1914, found political and ecclesiastical feud and unrest at summer heat. They were hectic and curious days to remember now. Days which have since seemed to be further removed than the days of George IV, for English chronology is now dated *ante-bellum* and *post-bellum*. An era has passed. The days of petty strifes at home were followed by the days of universal war abroad.

Society in London danced madly during those last days, as society had danced in Paris toward the close of the Second Empire. The tango was in the ascendant. Sophie Chotec (would-be Archduchess

of Austria) passed through London and watched its variants. For her, as for society, it was to be a prelude to the dance of death. Even her tragic assassination with her husband in June sounded no warning. The whirl of infectious riot continued. People dared life and death. A wild woman had pulled down the King's horse running in the Derby of 1913. A year later a young baronet threw himself, after midnight, from a festive launch into the Thames, to interest a jaded supper party, and was drowned. It seemed as though the exuberance of the Irishman who felt "blue-mouldy for need of a beating" had seized upon all. Yet in their prophetic souls people felt that something, some worthy crisis, some invigorating trouble was bound to come. Everything pointed at one time to civil war in Ireland, and men braced themselves for a struggle. Suddenly, above the cries in the street, above the domestic brawls, sounded the clear challenge of Germany overseas. With no uncertain sound the hammer of Thor beat upon the gates of empire!

After all that had passed or was passing, it was as refreshing as going out after a scrap with the cook, and listening to thunderous skies when they

are gathering for a deluge. In a moment of time all the troubles and worries and threatenings of politics became antediluvian, and the nation stepped down to do battle with the cleansing flood!

EPILOGUE

THE ominous calm and the paralysing uncertainties of July had passed for ever. Few troops were seen to move,—no crowds swayed through the streets. The symptoms without the signs of war marked the first days of August.

But a strange sight met the eyes of those whom chance had placed in a position to see—of men on Irish trawlers gun-running toward Ulster—fishermen in smacks off Devon and off Grimsby—coast watchers upon the chalky headlands—casual holiday makers on Sussex coasts or on Norfolk broads. These men saw the wonders of empire; the grey smoke curling upon the grey horizons, and the grey sinewy ships that slipped through daylight into dusk—and were no more seen.

For moments only these shapes were visible before they disappeared into the wastes of the North Sea. Not a shot was fired, and no historic

pennant was flown. Like a phantasm of clouds they passed on their way, but with them rested the keeping of the world.

The decisive stroke of the war had been struck before the war began. Some one had mobilised the fleet!

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PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY R. CLAY AND SONS, LTD.,
BRUNSWICK STREET, STAMFORD STREET, S.E. 1, AND BUNGAY, SUFFOLK

00021569

Digitized with financial assistance from
Dr. S.R.Babu
on 19 February, 2019